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Roman Protasevich | FOIA Research

10-12 Minuten

Roman Protasevich is one of the key regime change operatives in the Belarusian color revolution of 2020. His name appeared in the context of a Telegram channel called Nexta that overnight was made the voice of the Belarusian opposition.

According to a Ukrainian article sympathizing with Protasevich's activities[1]:

> Back in 2012, he was detained as an administrator of opposition groups on social networks.
>
> Protasevich was then a member of the Young Front, a center-right pro-European organization that organized street activities against Lukashenko. And also fought for the expansion of the use of the Belarusian language (to the detriment, of course, of Russian).
>
> He was a journalist for the Polish-Lithuanian-funded Euroradio, as well as Radio Liberty.
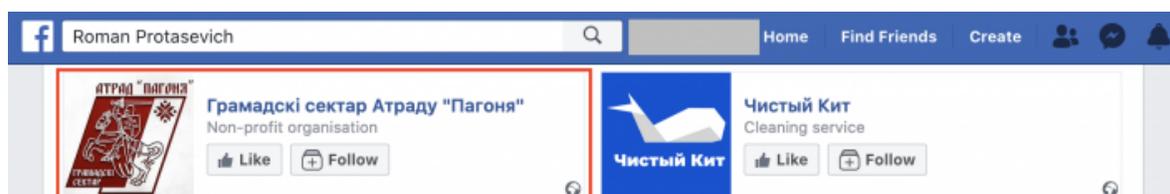
Logo of the Young Front

The nationalist, anti-communist and anti-Lukashenko "Young Front" (Малады Фронт, Malady Front), founded in 1997, emerged out of the intensified 1996-1997 protests in Belarus. It is officially registered in the Czech Republic. The Youth Front is known for its provocative political agitation against Lukashenko, and
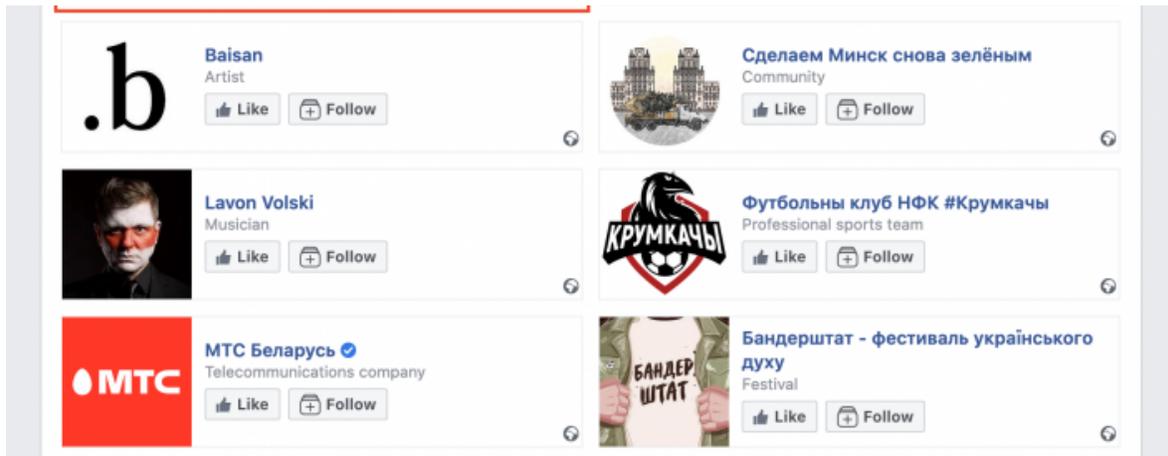
encourages its members to do military training. For example, in 2015 a Youth Front sports and patriotic club called "Warrior" was inaugurated,2 offering training sessions with airsoft guns, according to a Radio Liberty report (Belarusian: Radio Svaboda).3

Protasevich was part of the Maidan protests in Kiev 2013/2014, as a picture on Facebook shows, where, clad in a Belarusian People's State flag, he is taking part in the destruction of a Lenin statue.

Picture of Roman Protasevich during the Maidan protests 2013/2014, subtitled "Found this old photo. Maidan, winter, head of Lenin."

Protasevich has a neo-Nazi and anti-communist background. He is a sympathizer of the Pahonia Detachment4, a Belarusian militia that has fought alongside the neo-Nazi Azov Battalion in Ukraine's post-Maidan civil war.5

Roman Protasevich liked the Pahonia Detachment on Facebook.

Roman Protasevich as "Belarusian knight."

The group describes itself as a "non-governmental organization that helps Belarusian volunteers in Ukraine," on Twitter.6
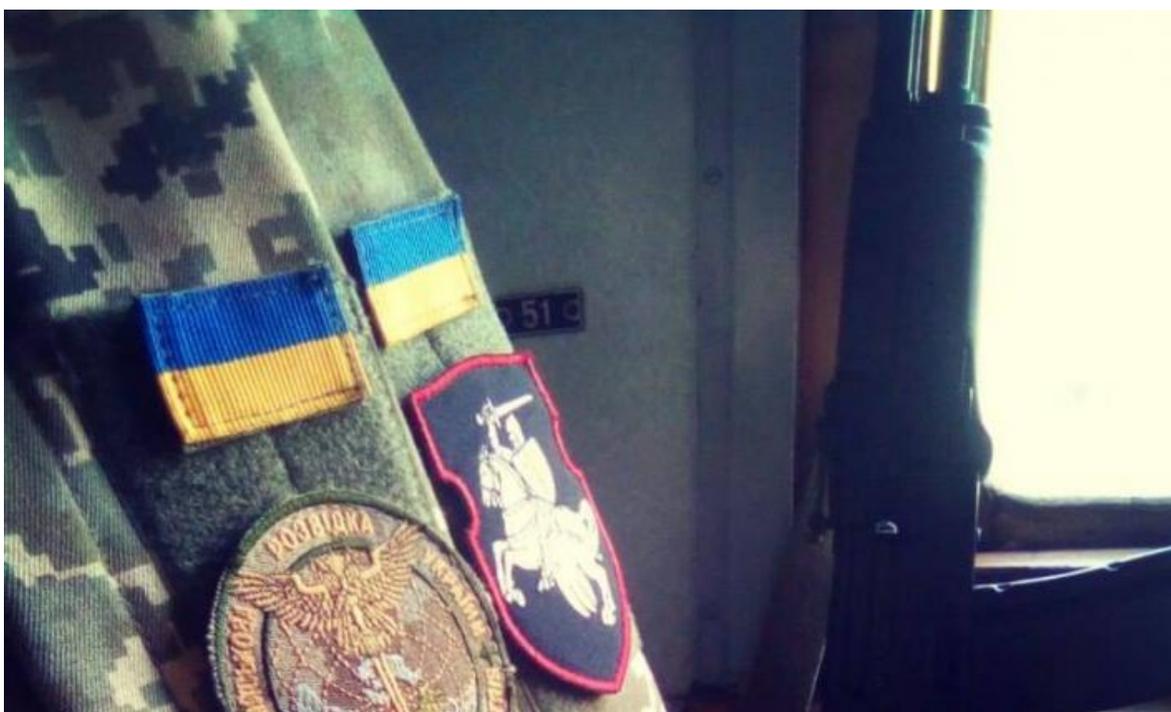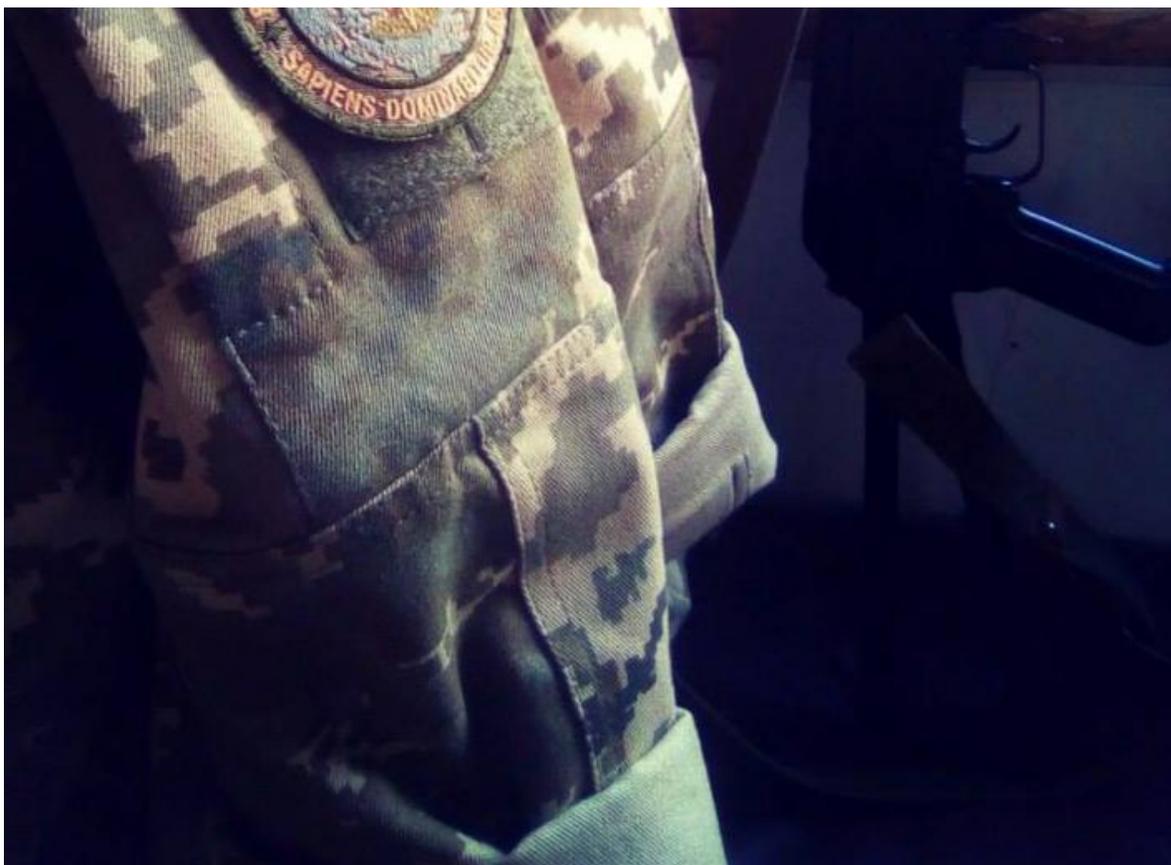
Facebook banner of the Pahonia Detachment.

Armed members of the Pahonia Detachment. The image subtitle says: "Retro photo, 2015."

Picture posted by the Pahonia Detachment on April 4, 2018, on Facebook, subtitled: "On the way to the front."

Members of the Pahonia Detachment. Note the Odinist tatooes on

neck and face.

2017

In February and March 2017, Belarus was swept by a series of demonstrations throughout the country, which Protasevich eagerly "documented," always just a step away from the neo-Nazi black block.

On March 4 he took part at the installment of a temporary nationalist memorial, going along with a symbolic book burning.

Picture by Roman Protasevich showing Zmitser Dashkevich holding a speech in front of the temporary nationalist memorial.

Book burning in front of the temporary nationalist memorial.

Picture by Roman Protasevich showing the temporary nationalist memorial.

One day later, he appeared amidst the black block of a demonstration in Brest, Belarus.

Roman Protasevich among the Black Block of a demonstration in

Brest, Belarus, on March 5, 2017.

Roman Protasevich among Black Block during the Brest
demonstration.

On March 10, 2017, Protasevich took part in a demonstration,
where again he was right in the middle of the neo-Nazi black
block. He posted pictures that show a man wearing a balaklava
sporting the Coat of Arms of the Belarusian People's Republic
(1918-1919), as well as a Thor Steinar jacket, a brand favored by
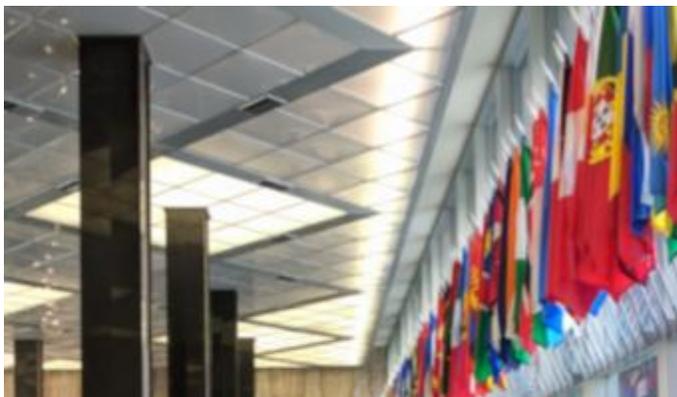neo-Nazis.

Picture by Roman Protasevich from a neo-Nazi rally in March 2017. Note the Thor Steinar jacket, a brand favored by neo-Nazis.

On March 28, 2017, the Committee to Protect Journalists reported that Protasevich was detained on charges of hoolianism for 10 days shortly before.7

According to his Facebook page, Protasevich moved to Prague, Czech Republic, on December 1, 2017.8

2018

On April 12, 2018, he arrived in Warsaw, Poland.9 On April 20, 2018, he flew via Brussels to Washington.10 On April 23, 2018, he posted a picture with the subtitle "The most important week in my life begins."11 The same day he posted a picture of himself inside the US State Department, stating "Never had so many important and interesting encounters in my life. Tired but very pleased."12 In DC he met with fellow regime change swamp creature, the Ukrainian-American Gleb Zhavoronkov.13

Picture of Roman Protasevich inside the State Department on April 23, 2018.

Picture of Gleb Zhavoronkov by Roman Protasevich

From Washington he flew via Brussels to Prague on May 7, 2018.14 On May 31, 2018, he continued his journey from Prague to Minsk, Belarus.15 From Minks, he traveled on to Kyiv, Ukraine, on June 15, 2018.16

According to his Facebook page, he started working for the USAID-supported radio in Belarus Euroradio.fm on August 31, 2018.17

Entities supporting Euroradio.fm, the former employer of Nexta's Roman Protasevich, including USAID and the Polish Solidarnosc Foundation.

2019

According to his Facebook page, Protasevich left his job with Euroradio on December 1, 2019.18

2020

In February 2020, Protasevich announced his new job as future editor of the Nexta Telegram network on the Polish-Belarusian channel Belsat: "In 10 minutes live on Belsat I will talk about the first media in Belarus of the 21th century as the future editor-in-chief of Nexta."19 He confirmed his new stint with a status message on Facebook, stating that he started working for Nexta in Warsaw, Poland, on March 19, 2020.17

If one is to believe the BBC, Nexta has started out as a anti-Lukashenko YouTube channel created by a Belarusian teenager, Stepan Putila, also known under the moniker Stepan Svetlov, in 2015.20 According to Strana.ua: "In Belarus, the channel became famous for inside information from the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the republic. It did not disclose the sources of its information."1 While in the course of the August protests in Belarus the independent Belarusian news landscape was practically shut down, only Nexta managed to continually publish reports from

inside the country. As the BBC wrote, "the popular Telegram messaging app called Nexta ... has managed to bypass many of the restrictions." The answer why Nexta succeeded where others failed, may be that the hitherto practically unknown channel is not a local grassroots effort, but operates out of neighboring Poland, where both, Protasevich and Putila currently reside.

Protasevich's partner at Nexta, Stepan Putila, aka Svetlov, has "... worked for ... Belsat (his father also works there as a sports commentator), which is based in Warsaw and is funded by the Polish Foreign Ministry."1 The channel's website says21:

Formally, the creation of the TV channel was the result of an agreement signed in 2007 between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland and Polish TV. The agreement provides for long-term cooperation and financing of the Belsat TV channel.

Belsat's motivations are more than shady. In 2015, an article that appeared on the channel encouraged people to join as volunteers on the side of Ukraine in the war with the "Novorussiya" states, including a contact email address and phone number.22 The station does regularly give a platform to Belarusian nationalists and neo-Nazis as well.

Facebook post by Ales Karnyienka showing Yanechak Yasav on Belsat. Notice the Odinist tatooes and Thor's hammer around his neck.
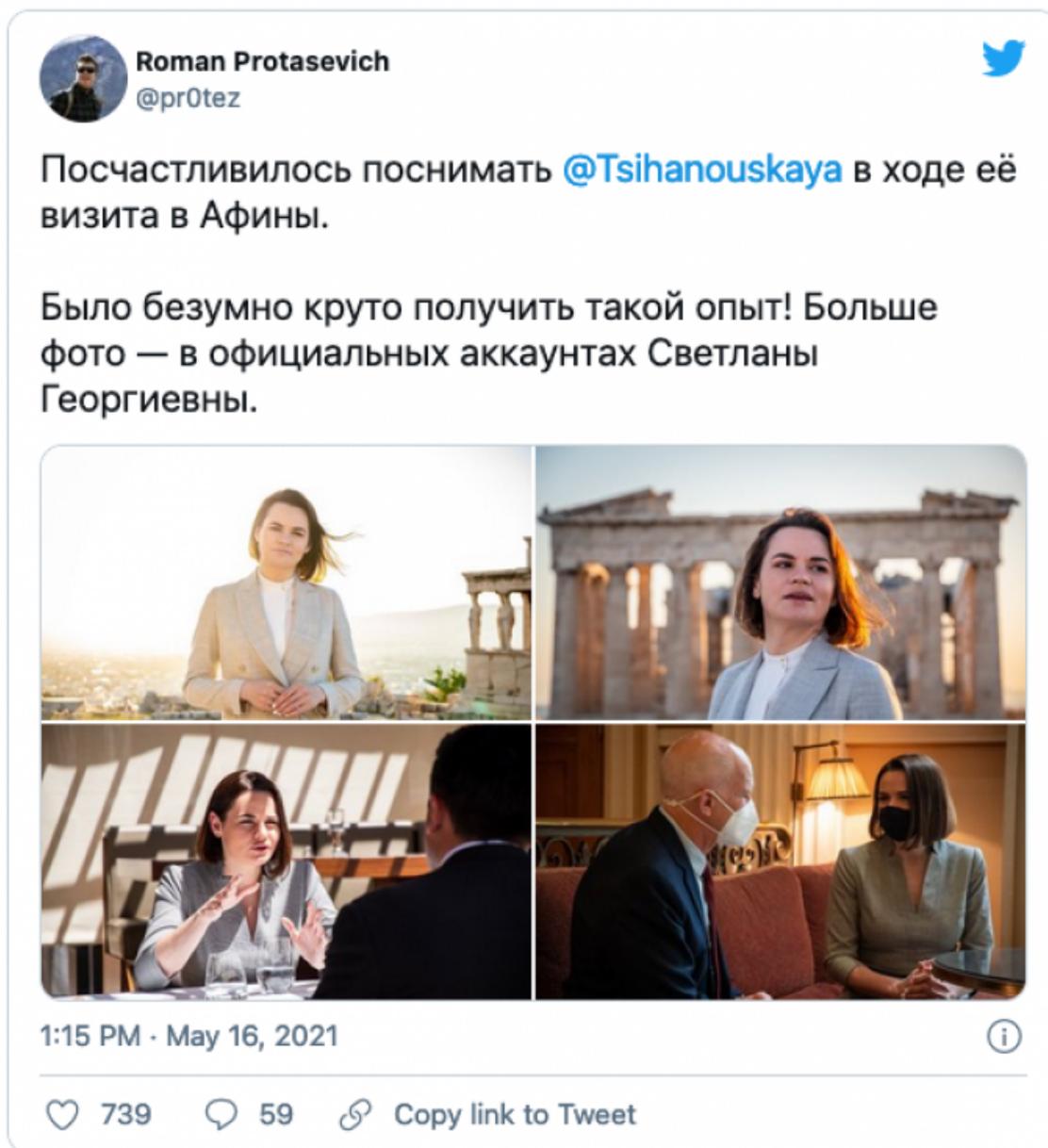

Stepan Putila of Nexta interviewing the Belarusian nationalist Ales Karniyenko for Belsat TV, who, like Putila, spurs on the Belarusian color revolution from Poland.

2021

Politico reported that on May 23, 2021, Protasevich had boarded a Ryanair flight from Athens, Greece, to Vilnius, Lithuania, but when the plane entered Belarusian airspace it was intercepted and ordered to land in Minsk, where Protasevich was arrested.23 The article dubs Protasevich a journalist, not an extremist, as a Belarusian court had rightfully ruled in 2020 in regards to *Nexta* hirelings. No mention of what Protasevich may have actually done in Athens, or intended to do in Vilnius. His presence in Greece roughly coincided with a visit of the Western-backed regime change leader in exile, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, with the

President of Greece, Katerina Sakellaropoulou,24 and US
Ambassador to Greece, Geoffrey Pyatt.25 According to
Protasevich's Twitter account, during Tsikhanouskaya's stay in
Athens he worked as her photographer, and took pictures of here
in different settings.26

Twitter post by Roman Protasevich from May 16, 2021, where he
says he worked as Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya's photographer
during her stay in Athens.

Links

- [Facebook page of Roman Protasevich](#)

- [Twitter profile of Roman Protasevich](#)

- [Instagram profile of Roman Protasevich](#)