

ISSUE #8

DECEMBER 1, 2020

CULTURAL RESISTANCE IN BELARUS



BELARUSIAN CULTURE SOLIDARITY FOUNDATION
BELARUSIAN PEN CENTRE

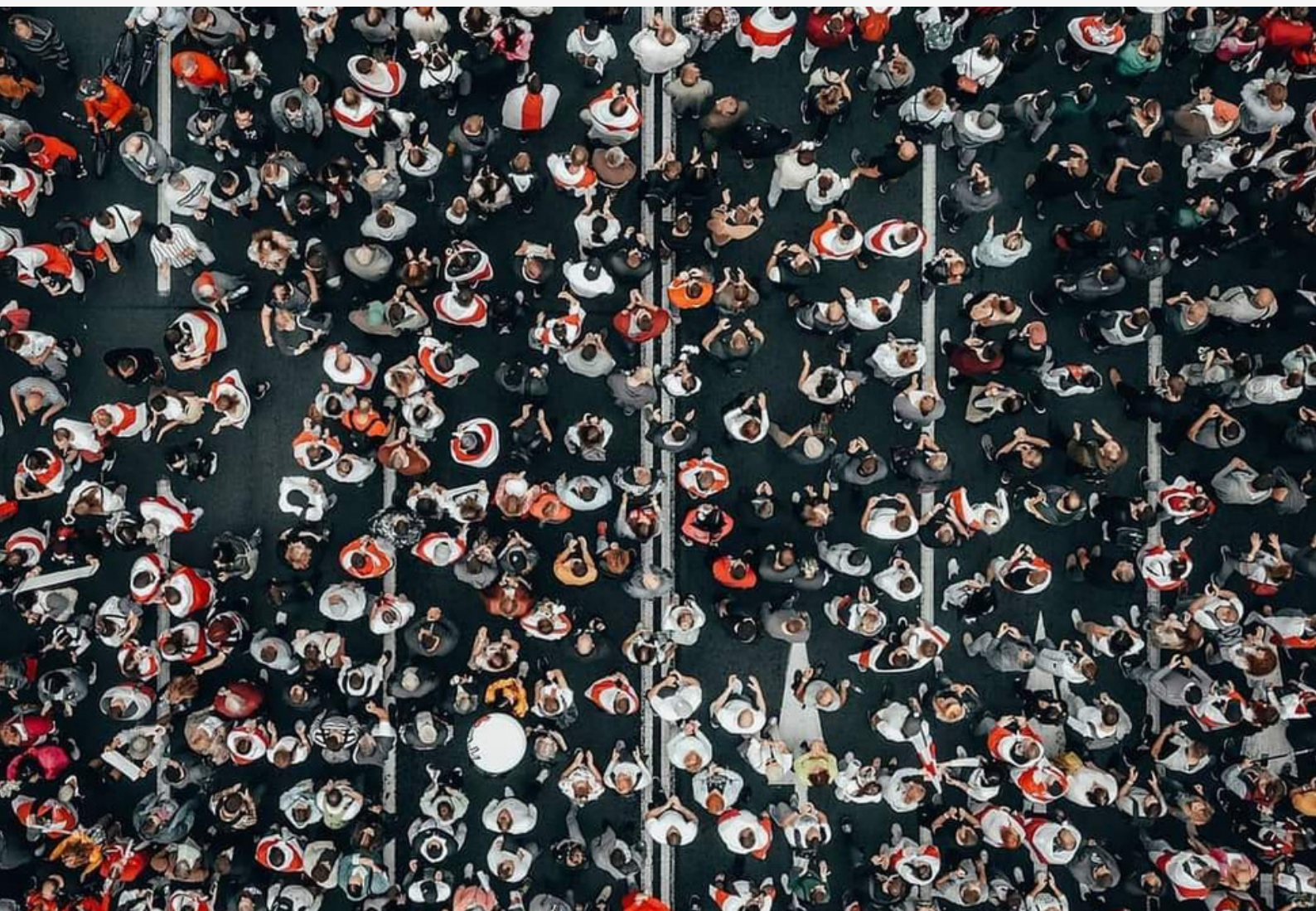


Photo Credit: Facebook

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STAND WITH BELARUSIAN ARTS AND CULTURE COMMUNITY

DONATE TO

THE **BELARUSIAN CULTURE SOLIDARITY FOUNDATION**

& **SAVE OUR SONGS CAMPAIGN**

SUPPORTED BY PEN BELARUS

1. ARRESTS

Maryia Kalenik, a student at the Belarusian State Academy of Arts who was detained on November 12 as accused under criminal case of organizing riots, has been recognized a political prisoner. ➔



Vital Byl, a historian, guide, and junior researcher at the Niasviž Museum-Reserve (Niasviž Castle is a UNESCO World Heritage site), author of a number of publications and books about the Radziwiłł family (they were a powerful magnate family maintaining the Castle), was detained on November 22 in Baraŭliany district in Minsk at the rally of the districts.

Natallia Bordak, an artist and poet from Niasviž, was summoned to the police department for a “preventive talk” and had a report drawn up for having participated in an unauthorized mass event. She then was sentenced to **7** days in jail.

Natalia is waiting for the results of the test on Covid, and if it turns out to be negative, she will be immediately taken to serve her sentence. Conditions in the Niasviž remand prison are harsh, the cells are in the basements, they are dump and don't even have running water, and Natallia has a sore spine and joints.



Alena Hironak, an actress, was detained during the peaceful March of Neighbours in Minsk on November 29. On October 26, Alena was already detained and released that same night. On December 1, Alena was fined **30** basic units (**264** Euro).

Photo Credit: Facebook

2. PRESSURE AND DISMISSAL, STRIKES



Photo Credit: mdrama.by

ANDREJ NOVIKAŭ, DIRECTOR OF THE LEADING REGIONAL THEATER IN MAHILEŬ AND THE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH THEATER FORUM "M.@RT.KONTAKT", WHICH HAS BEEN GATHERING FAMOUS THEATRES FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD IN MAHILEŬ SINCE 2006, WAS FIRED WITHOUT EXPLANATION.



But in fact for not putting pressure on his employees who took part in the protests and were detained. His colleagues collected 86 signatures under a collective appeal to keep Mr. Novikaŭ as the theatre's director, but a new director has already taken over his post.

Zmicier Sasnoŭski, the leader of the medieval folk band Stry Olsa, who was detained in Kletsk on November 13 and after having spent **3** days in the remand prison without food and in terrible conditions, fined **30** basic units (**267** Euro), had to leave Belarus as some unknown people have been looking for him and he had concerns about his safety.





**7 EMPLOYEES OF THE INSTITUTE
OF HISTORY OF THE ACADEMY
OF SCIENCES WERE FIRED.**

They are *Mikalai Voŭkaŭ, Aliaksej Šatanda, Kačiaryna Kryvičanina, Aleś Žlutka, Andrej Radaman, Tačiana Paŭloŭskaya* and *Uładzimir Šypila*; four of them were detained during the protests.

Five more employees resigned in solidarity (*Uładimir Tuhaj, Andrej Macuk, Vadzim Aniperkaŭ, Andrej Unučak, Vasil Varonin*).



Ihar Kulikoŭ,

a poet, translator, and lecturer at the Academy of Arts, was reprimanded for "participating in unauthorized mass events in November 2020".



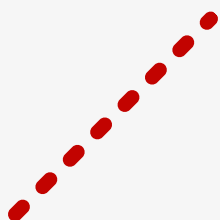
Jaŭhen Malikaŭ,

a historian from Homiel who was fired from the Belarusian State University of Transport on November 19 after having taken part in a rally and served **5** days in jail, was drafted into the army. Jaŭhen is 40 years old, and 27 is the age limit of the conscription age in Belarus.



Photo Credit: nashaniva.by

ALIAKSANDR PAMIDORAŬ,
RADIO PRESENTER AND
MUSICIAN, RESIGNED FROM
BELARUSIAN RADIO ROCKS.



***“There is a dissonance in hosting
entertainment programs at a time
when down on your street unknown
people are trying to arrest your
daughter.***

***When on the streets of your city
unknown people with no faces but
armed, grab civilians, your
neighbors, beat and torture,
unjustifiably throw them in jail.***

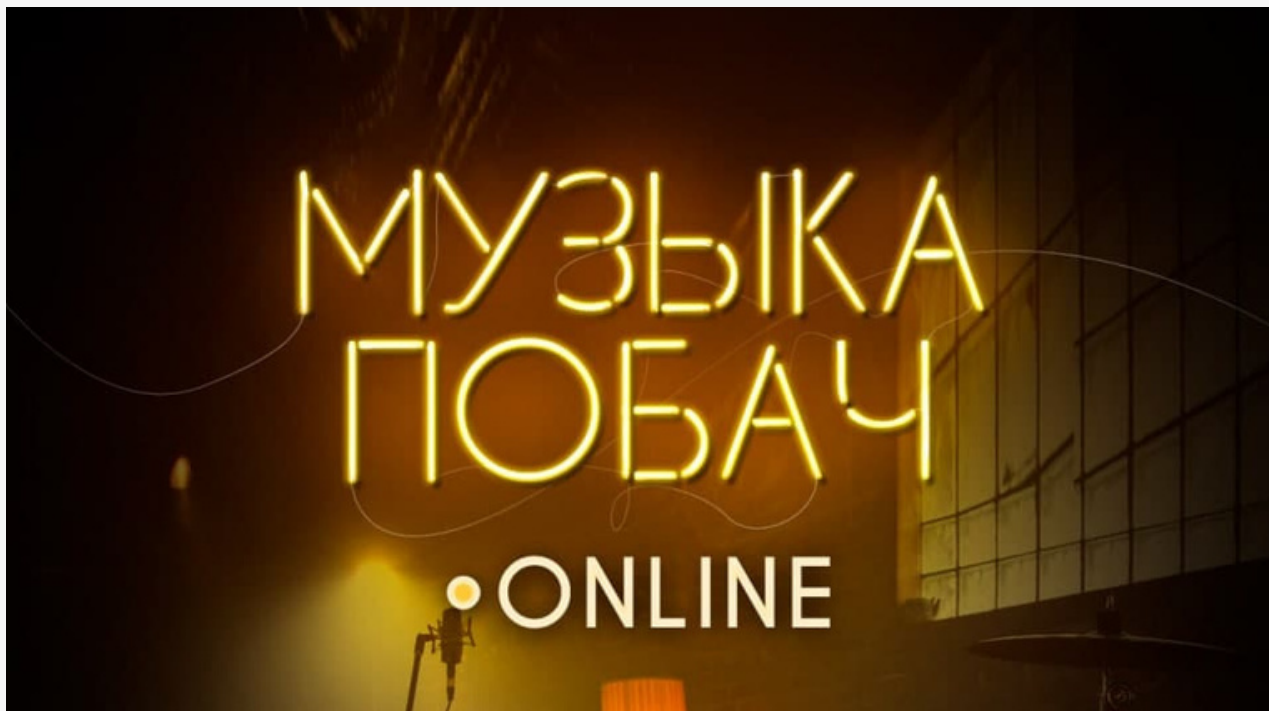
***When you’ve been behind the bars
yourself and when your colleagues
and friends are there,”** – Aliaksandr
said in a comment to the Belarusian
Culture Solidarity Foundation.*



Aleh Roŭda resigns from the position of
director of the Brest Music College,
which he has been occupying for two
years.

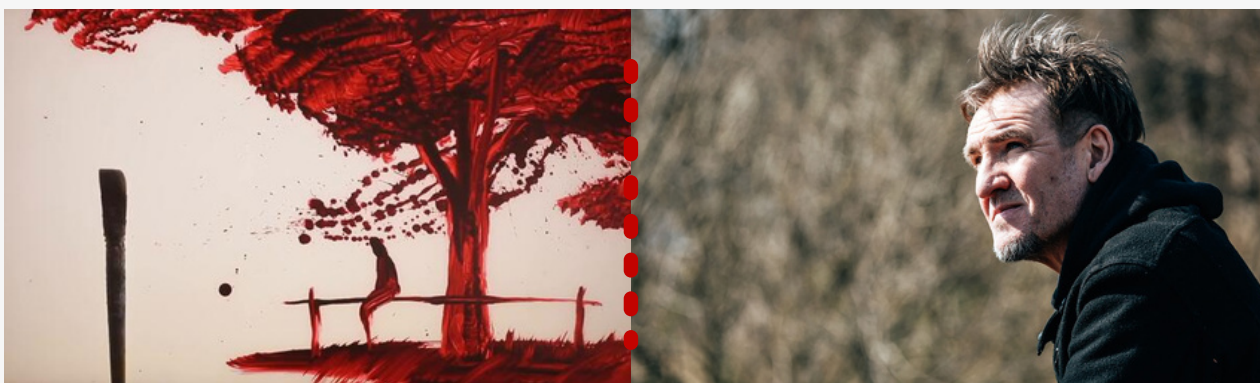
During the presidential election, he was
the chairman of the election
commission at the polling station where
Sviatlana Ćichanoŭskaja won the
majority of voices.

4. CULTURAL RESISTANCE



A big **concert "Music nearby"** took place on Friday, November 27 in Minsk in support of all those who have difficult times, as well as artists who, for obvious reasons, don't have the opportunity to perform.

RSP, Krama, Zmičér Vajcuškevič, Alena Žaludok and Chinchinchenel, Šviatlana Beń, Aleh Chamienka took part in the festival. You can support the musicians [here](#). See [the link](#) to watch the recording.



An artist **Aliaksandra Kanafalskaja** created a very emotional [video](#) for the song by **TOR BAND** dedicated to **Raman Bandarenka** and his mother.

Pit Paŭlaŭ gave a concert for the residents of Anharskaja neighbourhood in Minsk. See [the link](#) to watch the recording and support the musicians.



ВЫШЛА НИНА ПОГУЛЯТЬ



**STREET ART SHOWING NINA BAHINSKAJA IS
TRAVELLING AROUND MINSK.**



**NEW PIECE BY
ULADŽIMIR CESLER.**



See a virtual exhibition about the events after August 9 "Belarus of the Future. The power of women's will" following [the link](#).



The exhibition is created in cooperation with the independent platform **SHKLO**, which promotes the works of Belarusian photographers.

"THE EXHIBITION IS A STORY ABOUT THE POWER OF HUMANITY, WHICH AWAKENS WHEN PEOPLE CAN'T LIVE IN PEACE BECAUSE OF THE LIES, VIOLENCE, AND INJUSTICE. IT IS A STORY ABOUT PEOPLE'S DREAMS FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THEIR COUNTRY AND THE DESIRE TO FIGHT FOR IT", SAY THE ORGANIZERS.

A video version of the concert of **Paviel Arakialian** and his band **The Outsiders** was shown on November 28.

It was dedicated to all the unbreakable artists of the victory: musicians, writers, actors who are fired, arrested, beaten, but who still join the marches and continue creating, playing, and performing. You can donate any amount to the Belarusian Cultural Solidarity Fund at any time.



5. VOICE OF BELARUSIAN CULTURE



SIARHEJ SMATRYČENKA,
TRANSLATOR AND PHILOLOGIST,
AMBASSADOR OF INDEPENDENT
BELARUSIAN CULTURE IN THE
CZECH REPUBLIC.

“IT’S ALL ABOUT CULTURE
EXCLUSIVELY. AT THE SAME TIME,
OF COURSE, WE MUST TAKE INTO
ACCOUNT THAT CULTURE CAN
AND SHOULD SOMEHOW REFLECT
ON POLITICAL AND SOCIAL
EVENTS. WE HAVE THREE MAIN
AREAS OF ACTIVITY: INFORMING
PEOPLE IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC
ABOUT THE SITUATION IN
BELARUS; IMPLEMENTING OUR
OWN PROJECTS, SUCH AS
EXHIBITIONS, MEETINGS,
DISCUSSIONS; AND THE THIRD
AREA OF OUR ACTIVITY IS TO BE
MEDIATORS IN THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF VARIOUS
IDEAS IN COLLABORATION WITH
OTHER ORGANIZATIONS.”



Photo Credit: svaboda.org

Aleś Džianisaŭ, a musician, journalist, and leader of the Hrodna-based Belarusian folk punk band ***Dzieciuki***, who was detained on 11 August as he was riding a bicycle, beaten and by pure luck released after the court hearing, told about his detention and work under current conditions.

"IN SOME SONGS [OF THE THIRD ALBUM] WE SPOKE DIRECTLY ABOUT THE SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY. AGAIN, THIS WASN'T POLITICS. THIS WAS OUR CIVIC POSITION. IN FACT, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO STAY ASIDE FROM POLITICS IN OUR COUNTRY. IT WILL COME TO YOU WHETHER YOU WANT IT OR NOT."

Ihar Baranoŭski, a local historian from Brest, who experienced a **30**-day arrest for participating in mass events, shares his thoughts about the experience gained behind bars, the protests and the government's reaction to them.

"What I learned from this is, of course, that the people I met in jail are the future of Belarus. This experience is valuable. I realized that the system is based purely on force, violence, and the lies which they themselves spread among their employees and try to throw it at naive people. But my views have only strengthened."





ANDRUŠ TAKINDANH, WHO WAS DETAINED ON NOVEMBER 7 AFTER A CONCERT OF THE BAND **RECHA** IN MINSK AND SPENT **15** DAYS IN JAIL, TOLD ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCE.

"All the members of our band knew that it would happen sooner or later. And when the sentence was passed, we felt kind of relieved. We knew how the concerts in the neighbourhoods could end for us. We'd had this feeling, like guilt, that many of our colleagues have been in jail, so we anticipated it to happen with us. Honestly, it's a low price for all the joy we received performing for people at those local community gigs. What matters is that loads of people came to our last event, and we finished it before we got detained."



PAVIEL ARAKIALIAN, A JAZZMAN AND RECORD HOLDER IN THE NUMBER OF STREET CONCERTS HELD IN MINSK OVER THE PROTEST MONTHS, WHO WAS DETAINED AFTER ONE OF SUCH GIGS ON NOVEMBER 7 AND SENTENCED TO **15** DAYS IN JAIL, SHARED IMPRESSIONS OF HIS IMPRISONMENT.

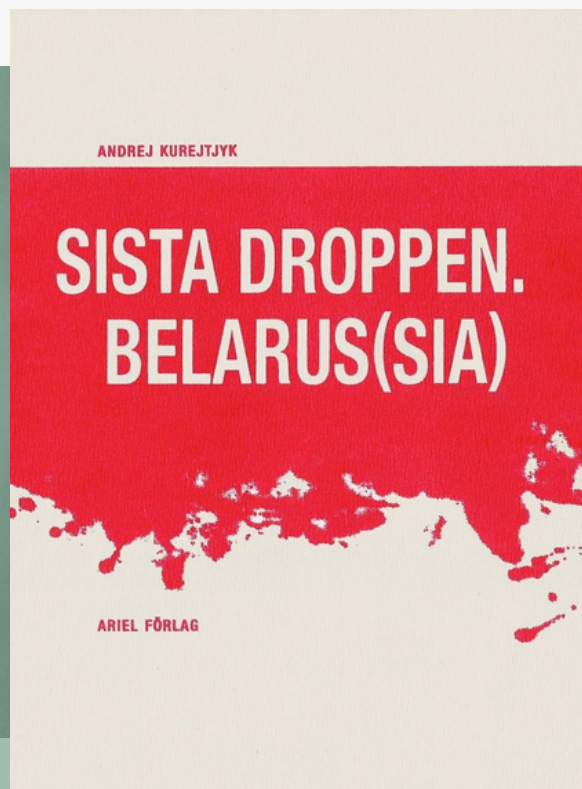
"I feel more energy now than before my detention. I saw the mood of the people in jail, people who are, basically, held captive. They discuss what their next steps will be, how to reform health care, the police system, education. You can employ their suggestions to reform the system in the next two-three years. There are ready-made models for everything which just need to be adapted to our realities."



5. INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY



Photo Credit: tnaviny.by



Andrej Kurejčyk's new play "Offended. Belarus (sia)", which describes the dramatic events in Minsk after the August 9 elections, has been published in Swedish!

It was previously presented as part of the international theatrical solidarity project by the Swedish Royal Theater in Stockholm, and readings were held in a dozen cities around the world.

The proceeds will go to support Belarusian cultural community as part of the [Save Our Songs](#) campaign supported by PEN Belarus. Follow [the link](#) to purchase a paper copy.

"Every straw is a straw", the organizers believe, and we are incredibly grateful that their support inspires us not to give up!

More than 50 Polish writers have signed a [letter of solidarity](#) with their Belarusian colleagues. Among the signatories is a Nobel Laureate **Olga Tokarczuk**.

"In the hour of trial, be sure of our solidarity. Human rights are the same for everyone, and by defending them, we will always fight for your freedom and ours."

Ukrainian writers sent an open [letter of support](#) to their Belarusian colleagues.

"We, maybe better than some, understand what the price of freedom is. Together with you, we address the international public: support free Belarusians! Help end the violence in the European country! Do not repeat the appeasement mistakes, do not be silent!"

#freewordsbelarus

#СвабодныяСЛОВАбеларусь

A video reading campaign **#freewordsbelarus** was launched on 26 November, the 90th birthday of the renowned Belarusian writer Uladzimir Karatkievič.

“With the #freewordsbelarus-action, 36 presidents and board members from 33 writers’ and translators’ organisations from 22 countries raise their voice for the Belarusian democracy movement, representing 120,000 authors from Europe, who stand in solidarity.”

The joint action of the European Writers’ Council (EWC) and the European Council of Literary Translators’ Associations (Ceatl) is a strong sign of solidarity with the Belarusian people and the detained Belarusian authors and artists. The solidarity campaign **#freewordsbelarus** presents „The Border“ from the book “Frescoes” by **Barys Pjatrovič** the Chair of The Union of Belarusian Writers.



Documentary drama **“Breathing together”** is to be staged at the Russian Drama Theater of Lithuania. The play features Belarusian actors and directors who have participated in the events of the last months in Belarus. The premiere is scheduled for December.



The Russian band **Kasta** created a video for their song “Выходи гулять”, which depicts the tortures of Belarusian security forces towards the detained peaceful protesters.

6. AUCTION TO HELP BELARUSIAN CULTURAL FIGURES



KACIARYNA IVANCHYKAVA, THE SOLOIST OF THE BAND **IOWA**, HAS PROVIDED HER UNIQUE PAINTING FOR THE AUCTION TO SUPPORT HER REPRESSED COLLEAGUES IN BELARUS.

[MAKE A BID](#) AND SUPPORT BELARUSIAN CULTURAL FIGURES.

"I DREW THIS BIRD ..., EVEN, PROBABLY, IT'S MYSELF. FOR ME, IT'S SOMETHING WONDERFUL. THE BIRD IS SINGING. SHE HAS A VOICE, CONFIDENCE. IN HER MOOD, HER POSTURE I FEEL LIKE THIS BIRD IS LOOKING FOR BALANCE. AND SHE IS ON THE RIGHT TRACK," KACIA SAYS.

7. MISCELLANEOUS

Viktar Babaryka,

Lukashenka's major rival who was arrested on 18 June and has been kept in the KGB pre-trial detention center, has his right to buy books violated. The prisoner can either borrow books from the prison library or buy them, according to the list, in a bookstore, but the books for Viktar orders aren't bought or given to him.

Besides, the political prisoner did not receive any letters and postcards sent to him on his birthday on November 9.



Maryia Kaleśnikava, who has been kept in Zhodzina remand prison since the beginning of September, had her books taken from the prison cell. The books were "**Stephen Hawking's** Universe", **Yuval Noah Harari's** "21 Lessons for the 21st Century", and "Homo Deus. A Brief History of Tomorrow".

Maryna Hłazava, a suspect in the Karahod case ("karahod" stands for a combination of a circle dance and chorus singing, similar to the choreia of ancient Greece), was released from prison and placed under house arrest on November 24. On September 13, a water cannon was used in Brest as protesters were singing and doing "karahod". A criminal case was instituted against the protesters under Part 1 of Article 342 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus - the organization of group actions, grossly violating public order and involving obvious disobedience to the legitimate demands of the



authorities (punished with a fine, or arrest, or restriction of liberty for a term of up to three years, or imprisonment for the same term). Dozens of people are suspects in the case at the moment, but Maryna was the only one put in jail.

This newsletter was prepared in cooperation by



BELARUSIAN CULTURE SOLIDARITY FOUNDATION



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