



Belarussian
PEN
Centre

Cultural Resistance in Belarus

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"We wanted to do this [kind of a non-violent revolution] without bloodshed. It was an idealistic plan."

Svetlana Alexievich

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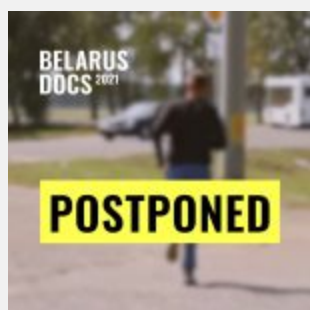
*SUPPORTED BY PEN BELARUS

1. ARRESTS, CONVICTIONS, PERSECUTION



An exhibition "**The machine breathes, but I don't**", dedicated to Belarusian medical workers, had to be closed, and the organizers of the exhibition were detained on April 5.

Taćciana Hacura-Javorskaja [Tatiana Gatsura-Yavorskaya], human rights defender, organizer of many cultural initiatives, including documentary film festivals and the exhibition "The machine breathes, but I don't" is a suspect in a criminal case.



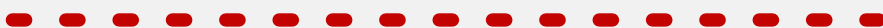
The online documentary film festival **BelarusDocs**, scheduled for April 13-19, has been postponed by the organizers because of the mass detentions of activists.



Mikoła Kananovič [Mikola Kananovich], poet and editor-in-chief of Gazeta Slonimskaya, was summoned to the police on April 7. According to police, a publication containing repost from a telegram channel recognized by the authorities as extremist was found on the newspaper's website.



Uładzimir Łobač [Uladimir Lobach], Doctor of Historical Sciences, ethnographer, author of multiple books and publications, poet, was fired from Polack State University on April 7. He was one of the signatories of the statement in defense of the white-red-white flag.



The exposition of the creative association "**Pahonia**", which spoke in support of Aleś Puškin, had to be removed two days before its official closing in the Palace of Arts in Minsk.



Raman Vasiukovič [Raman Vasiukovich], journalist, was fined 20 basic units [183 EUR] for bringing a copy of the book "Belarusian Donbass" to Belarus.



Taciana Niadbaj, a poet, writer, and Vice-President of the Belarusian PEN Center, was asked to take back the copies of the book The Theories of 20th Century Literature which she had given for selling to the state-owned chain of stores Belkniha.



A new edition of **Alhierd Bacharevič's** book Sabaki Eury (The Dogs of Europe), published in Vilnius by the Belarusian publisher Januškievič, was taken for expertise at crossing the Belarusian border.



Lighting artist **Daniła Hančaroŭ** [Danila Hancharou], fired from the New Drama Theater for the strike, is charged under part 1 of Article 342 of the Criminal Code – "organization and preparation of actions that grossly violate public order."



Aleś Bialacki [Ales Bialiatski], head of the human rights centre Viasna, PEN Belarus member, writer, was interrogated by the Investigative Committee on April 9 as a witness in the criminal case against Viasna under part 2 of Article 342 of the Criminal Code – Training of persons to take part in group actions that grossly violate public order". The interrogation was conducted in the Belarusian language, as Mr. Bialiatski demanded. He signed a non-disclosure document.

2. SYMBOLS

A resident of Slonim was sentenced to 7 days of administrative arrest for “picketing”, and his car with a big “Pahonia” sticker and a white-red-white flag on it was confiscated.



Julia Mihailava [Yulia Mikhailava] was detained on April 7 after being identified in a photo among a group of women walking around Minsk with white-red-white umbrellas. After inspecting their home, police detained Julia’s mother Taciana and brother Piotr too. Julia was sentenced to 25 days of administrative arrest, her mother – to 5, and her brother – to 6.

Citizens are tried for the red film (foil) on a window glass, the coat of arms on the wall of their own house, flags in the windows. Police also hang flags in the windows of the apartments they come in with searches, take a photo and punish for non-existing picketing.



3. CULTURAL RESISTANCE

Belarusian artists, members of the creative association "Pahonia", spoke in support of **Aleś Puškin** [Ales Pushkin], recognized as a political prisoner.

"Is dissent an occasion to file a lawsuit against an artist? Has the fundamental humanitarian right – the right for freedom of expression – ceased to function in our country?"



Cichan Klukač [Tsikhan Klukach],
an 18-year-old political prisoner, makes such drawings.



Photo from Facebook page of Ihar Baranouski

Lilia Kvatsabaya
Future



Olga Yakubouskaya
Protector of law



karikatu.rama
Alternative poster.
We'd like to see the heroes' faces



Vladimir Tsesler
Holocaust Remembrance Day



A selection of paintings
by the Belarusian artist
Lena Krashevka



Maksim Znak is not only a lawyer, he is also a poet and musician, and during his imprisonment (seven months for now) he's written more than a hundred works: ninety stories, dozens of poems and songs.



Svetlana Alexievich is writing a book about the post-election events in Belarus.

4. VOICES OF BELARUSIAN CULTURE



Victar Marcinovič [Martsinovich], writer:

"They've realized culture is the biggest challenge. It was culture that gradually led to the new situation. That's why there's a war against culture, like in case with the exhibition about medical workers."

Natalla Kačatkova [Natalia Kochetkova], actress, tells about having left the Yanka Kupala Theater:

"We have a wonderful collective! Now we meet and shoot in the cold until late at night, it's rather challenging. But communication brings such joy, such mutual love!.. We feel great respect for each other. I think hadn't we quit all together, we probably would never realize how much we care for each other. We have all opened our best sides."

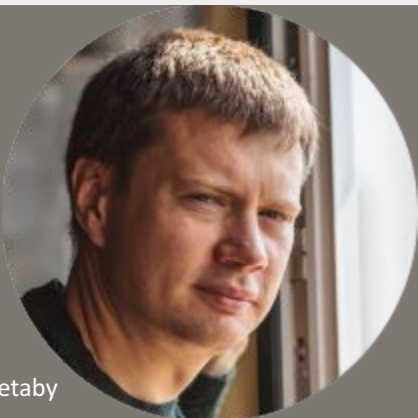


Photo: gazetaby

Kanstancin Jaškoŭ [Konstantin Yaskov], composer:

"There should be a lot of people like Viktar Babaryka, active, rich, daring and free, then everything will develop – the society as a whole and culture. Diversity requires absolute freedom."

Iryna Dziamjanava [Irina Demyanova], professor and program director of the International Film Festival Listapad:

"As just a citizen, unrelated to cinema, I wonder how the testimonies of those, for example, who went through detentions and interrogations, will be preserved. Where does this experience remain, other than in people's memory? Because if there is nothing left, we will have nothing to show, the next trauma will not be processed as experience of the nation, so it will all happen again, no matter who will be in power."



5. INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

A full-length **documentary** about contemporary Belarusian music has been released on the Russian channel RBC.



The exhibition “**Every day. Art. Solidarity. Resistance**” about the Belarusian protest can be watched online.



An independent Georgian organization **Kontaktobana** calls on to show solidarity and suggests that people can send a postcard in support of more than 300 Belarusian political prisoners, and then plans an online exhibition of all sent postcards.



An art exhibition **Awakening of Belarus** opened at the Belarusian House in Warsaw on April 9.

At the documentary film festival **Artdocfest** in Moscow in the out-of-competition program "Long live Belarus!" 7 documentaries from 2019-2020 were shown.



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