



Belarussian
PEN
Centre

Cultural Resistance in Belarus

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“One lives just for themselves and their children, and it’s ok, but another is guided by some bigger ideals. It will be horrifying if we build a prison for ourselves and our children with our own hands,” Alaksandr Ždanovič.

1. PERSECUTION, CONVICTIONS, CULTURAL POLICY

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1. PERSECUTION, CONVICTIONS, CULTURAL POLICY



Pavieł Sieviaryniec [Pavel Sevyarynets] was sentenced to seven years in prison on May 25. In court Pavieł chanted “We believe! We can! We’ll win!” and was later punished for that.

Another 21 persons have been recognized as political prisoners in Belarus, among them **Siarhiej Vołkaŭ** [Siarhei Volkau], an actor of the Palessie Drama Theater. Siarhej was detained, allegedly, in connection with the Pinsk case, and has been in the Baranavičy pre-trial detention center since May 5.



Julija Čarniaŭskaja [Yulia Charniauskaaya] is facing charges. Her lawyer, however, isn’t allowed to make any information public ! Julija remains under house arrest.



Aksana Zareckaja [Zaretskaya], an expert in etiquette and culture, a member of the Coordination Council, had a search on May 26, after which she was invited for a conversation "about the inadmissibility of illegal actions" and released.



Alaksandr Ždanovič [Aliaksandr Zhdanovich], an actor and TV presenter, was fired from the Maxim Gorky National Academic Theater “for committing an immoral act incompatible with the work in the theater”. The artist himself believes that the reason for his dismissal is his civil position. In November 2020, he served nine days of administrative arrest for participating in a protest and has been outspoken about the terror in the country.



An exhibition of photographer and local historian **Viktar Barysienkaŭ** "It's time to remember" about the lost heritage of Viciebsk which was to open in the local history museum on May 27 was cancelled by the administration 2 days before its opening. Instead, the artist posted it on his Facebook page.



A cafe **Biscuit** in Viciebsk, where many cultural events were held, stopped working on May 31. The reasons for the closure are connected with the concert of musician **Aleś Dzianisaŭ** [Ales Dzianisau]; he was detained and beaten on August 11, 2020; on March 18, he was summoned for questioning by the Department for Combating Economic Crimes.

2. SYMBOLS

Stefanija Cichinskaja [Stefania Tsikhinskaya], film director and artist, was sentenced on May 24 to 10 days of administrative arrest for white-red-white paper hearts in her window.



Vitold Ašurak [Vitold Ashurak] was buried in Biarozaŭka on May 26. Patrol cars stood at entering the town, blocking it for the people who had white-red-white symbols with them.



Barys Chamajda [Khamaida], an activist distributing Belarusian literature, newspapers and magazines under a white-red-white umbrella in the center of Viciebsk, was detained again on May 27.



Activists who have previously been prosecuted for holding unauthorized mass events are tried again, often on completely trumped-up charges.

3. DISSENT AND CULTURAL ACTIVISM



Sergei Ski

Мастацтва памяці Вітольда Ашурка



allkimiya



Olga Yakubouskaya

Art reflecting on the other events



Andrej Žalazka

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest,
25.05.2021



Olga Yakubouskaya

To the Mayor of Riga Martins Stakis



Vera MoPer

the airport of the future Belarus



The big online concert of the **Volny Chor** with the program **Mury** took place on May 27.

An online concert in memory of **Vitold Ašurak** and to support his family.



In support of the repressed cultural figures, Belarusian writer **Sasha Filipenko** donated to a charity auction three editions of his novels, which he will sign personally for the winner.

EBU Executive Board agreed to suspend Belarus Member BTRC.



4. VOICES OF BELARUSIAN CULTURE



Hanna Sieviaryniec about Pavel's sentence:

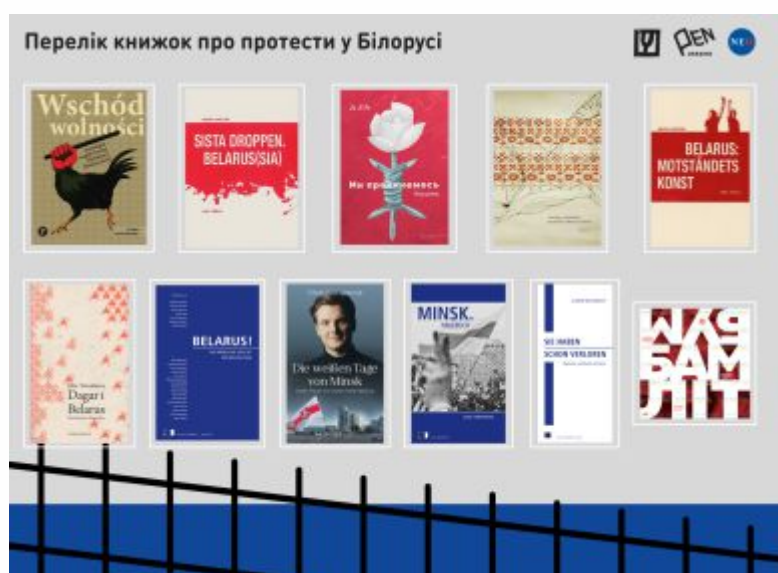
"Despite the fact that there is a lot of suffering around now, that it is very difficult to keep from hatred, anger, curses, when I reflect, I inevitably feel sorry. I feel sorry for the people who are given life, and they spend it on fear, on the deeds which in their dreams they will be ashamed of, and when old they will be ashamed of. None of them can say that they will tell their grandchildren what they did on May 25, 2021. For our children and grandchildren, these will be legendary stories. But none of these people will be able to say, on May 25, 2021, I, my dear, passed a sentence to Sieviaryniec."

5. INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY



A number of organizations released statements in support of the detained journo and blogger Raman Pratasievič [Pratasevich], among them

[PEN Moscows and Free Word Association,](#)
[PEN International,](#)
[PEN America,](#)
[and The National Ukrainian Writers Union](#)



Iya Kiva, a Ukrainian poet and translator, prepared a detailed [article](#) on the **Belarusian protest art**, in the Ukrainian language.



[Joep Bertrams'](#) [works](#) themed Belarus

An exhibition **Wordless – Falling Silent Loudly** is taking place in Dresden.
Belarus is represented by the works of poets
Dźmitry Strocaŭ [Dmitry Strotsev] and **Anatol Ivaščanka** [Ivashchanka].



The Berlin-based publisher **Edition Fototapeta** released two more books about the events in Belarus in the German translation, they are “Sie haben schon verloren” by **Alhierd Bacharevič** and “Minsk. Tagebuch” by **Jula Cimafiejeva** [Yulia Tsimafeyeva].

See the link for the online presentation.

NEUE BÜCHER ZU BELARUS

The film **COURAGE** directed by **Alaksiej Pałujan** [Aliaksei Paluyan] telling about the protest events in Belarus in summer 2020 is nominated for the **Berlinale Documentary Award**.



Svetlana Alexievich and **Angelina Jolie** discussed the situation in Belarus. The meeting was organized by the **Belarusian Culture Solidarity Foundation** in partnership with **Amnesty International**.

6. POLITICAL PRISONERS' BIRTHDAYS



June 1 is the Birthday of **Maryja Kalenik**, a political prisoner, student and future designer.

Maria was detained on November 12 as a suspect in the criminal case under Part 1 of Art. 342 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus (organization or participation in group actions that grossly violate public order), she is currently facing trial.




Maryja's sister says that the girl has always been sensitive to injustice,

"She, like many others, is opposed to the election fraud and violence, dictatorship – and she openly expressed her position. We received three letters from her. She writes to her grandmother that she doesn't regret anything, that she is faithful to her principles and values, that she keeps her head up. And that she's missing us."

To congratulate Maryja with a letter or postcard, write to:

СІЗА-1. 220030, г. Мінск, вул. Валадарскага, 2.

***Messages should be written only in the Belarusian or Russian language.**

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