



Belarussian
PEN
Centre

Cultural Resistance in Belarus

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*No matter where we are and what's happening to us,
we are the trees of Belarus...*

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STAND WITH BELARUSIAN ARTS AND CULTURE COMMUNITY

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1. PERSECUTION, CONVICTIONS, CULTURAL POLICY

Uładzimir Piatroŭ's [Uladzimir Piatrou] contract wasn't extended by The Opera House.

Uładzimir Piatroŭ – People's Artist of Belarus, in the troupe since 1993 – in August 2020, together with Paviel Łatuška [Pavel Latushka] and other workers of the Yanka Kupala theatre, recorded anti-violence appeals.



From the information of **BY Culture**, the new director of the **Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theater** **Viačastaŭ Harbuzaŭ** [Viachaslau Harbuzau] is going to fire the artists who spoke against violence in the video appeal in 2020 (188 people), by the end of the summer.



Three political prisoners from the **Union of Poles in Belarus** – **Irena Biarnackaja** [Irena Bernatskaya], **Maryja Ciškoŭskaja** [Maria Tsishkouskaya] and **Hanna Panišava** [Hanna Panishava] were deported to Poland from the pre-trial prison, with no right to return to Belarus.



Andrzej Poczobut, journalist, and the union's chairwoman **Anžalika Borys** were also offered release in exchange for deportation from the country, but they refused. Andrzej Poczobut is denied access to the medication for his heart condition.





Dzianis Ivanoŭ, a chamber choir musician, was detained at his workplace at the Philharmonic on June 1 and sentenced to 15 days of administrative arrest. Earlier he had served two 15-day terms.

The apartment of **Alaksiej Kuźmin** [Aliaksey Kuzmin], the soloist of the band **Zakon Huka**, was searched on June 2.



Financial police came to **Dzianis Dudzinski**, actor and former BTRC TV-presenter, and **Kaciaryna Rajeckaja** [Katsiaryna Raetskaya], producer and his wife. Their apartment was searched. The reason: there are questions with taxes.

The apartment of **Valeryja Kustava's**, a poet and journalist, was broken into by the regime's security forces on June 3, with a search. Valeryja herself was not in the apartment at that time.



Police officers tried getting into the house of **Alina Nahornaja**, the activist promoting the use and spread of the Belarusian language, on June 3. It's not the first time.

Unknown individuals tried to access the apartment of **Ihar Klimienka**, an artist of the Belarusian State Philharmonic, on June 3.



The Prosecutor General's Office of Belarus wants to interrogate **ex-President of Lithuania Valdas Adamkus** in the case of genocide of the population of Belarus during the Second World War. This was stated by the head of the investigation group Senior Prosecutor of the Prosecutor General's Office of Belarus Eduard Skuratau.

Directors in at least six cultural institutions (theatres, museums and the National Library) were replaced during the half-year work of the new **Minister of Culture**, Anatol Markievič [Anatol Markievich].

2. SYMBOLS

Dźmitry Ruto [Dmitry Ruto], a Tribuna.com journalist, was detained on June 1, accused of illegal picketing for a white-red-white scarf in his car and sentenced to 15 days of administrative arrest.



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Zinaida Smirnova, a 62-year-old pensioner, was fined 870 rubles [281 EUR] for a white and red scarf she was wearing around her waist.

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A resident of Brest was sentenced to 3 months in jail for tearing a state flag from its flagpole and throwing it on the ground.

.....

Volha Veramejenka, the owner of the store **Admietnaść** in Hrodna, specializing in selling goods with national symbols, was detained on June 3 for "picketing." Security forces confiscated several boxes of white-red-white goods. The pressure on the store has been there since January.

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Barys Chamajda [Khamaida], an activist distributing Belarusian literature, newspapers and magazines under a white-red-white umbrella in the center of Viciebsk, was detained on June 3 for "picketing" and sentenced to 8 days of administrative arrest.



.....

Alaksandr Ivulin, a journalist and blogger, was sentenced to 30 days of administrative arrest for a flag hung in his window. According to Alaxandr and the witnesses, there hasn't been any flag in the window this year, so the police must have hung it there to take pictures and present as evidence of the offense. Alaxandr Ivulin has been actively supporting the protest, including with materials on his [Youtube channel](#).

3. LIFE OF PEOPLE BEHIND BARS

Anhielina Turaviec [Angelina Turavets], who served 20 days of administrative arrest in the Viciebsk detention center for a mask with a white-red-white print, said that she could have a book only for 30 minutes a day.



Stefaniya Cichinskaja [Stefania Tsikhinskaya], director and artist, released after 10 days of administrative arrest for white and red paper hearts in her window, spoke about the conditions of the detention for those on political charges: care packages don't reach the prisoners, toothpaste and brushes can be taken away, if lucky one can get sanitary pads, toilet paper and medication after asking for it many times.

Nadziežda Zielankova [Nadziezhda Zieliankova], the wife of **Alaksandr Vasilevič** [Aliaxandr Vasilievich], businessman, co-founder of online media kyky.org and The Village-Belarus, owner of Vondel / Hepta Agency and Gallery space Ź, about his health in the pre-trial prison,

"He's been in jail since August. He's not getting any healthier. He's yellow. Sometimes his color becomes normal, white. Then gray, then yellow again. His eyes are always filled with pus. The ligaments on his leg were torn and a surgery is needed. The filling in his tooth fell out, he cannot get it done in prison."



Aleś Puškin [Ales Pushkin] refused to talk to the Russian-speaking investigator. Also, his detention term has been extended till August 30.



Maria Kalesnikava was filmed for state television on June 3 without her permission.



Natalla Chierše [Natalia Hershe], a political prisoner artist, was put in a punishment cell. Natalla's brother was informed that she "has violated the order of serving the sentence." Natalla was kept in the punishment cell from May 6 to 23, and got there again on May 24.



Paweł Sieviaryniec was allowed a two-hour meeting with his wife and son in the prison, through the phone behind the glass window.



Kasia Budzko, the student activist, political prisoner under trial in the students' case, writes in one of her letters about the experience of the day-to-day court hearings, *"Actually, if I were tried alone, it would be a real torture, to ride this "uber discomfort" every day, to sit and listen to all this nonsense and to have very little rest. All these disadvantages are offset by one advantage – 11 other cool people, thanks to whom it's not so difficult to get up at 6 am, sit at the hearings, joke and listen to funny jokes, support each other when needed, in general, with them even going to the court feels fun))))"*



4. DISSENT AND CULTURAL ACTIVISM



Irena Kaciałovič [Irena Katsialovich] prepared a review of ten Belarusian designers whose work has become a mirror of public sentiment during these months of resistance.

Andrej Ciapin [Andrei Tsiapin] produced a rap song and a video clip that reminds us of our battle for respect and freedom.



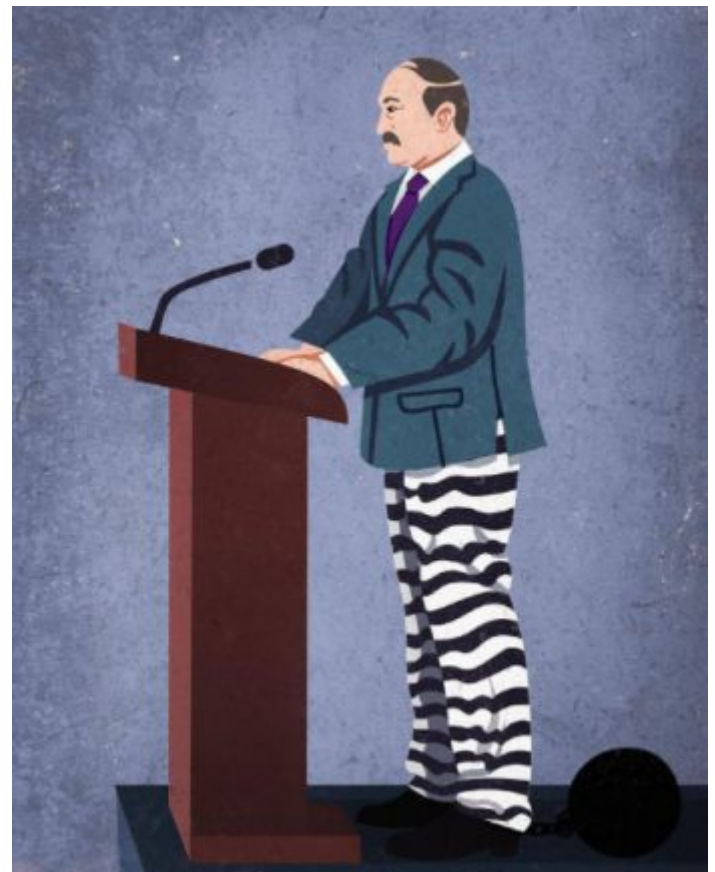
Victory Artists: a concert of **Sergei Pukst**, the funds raised will go to the surgery for **Lavon Cimochin**, a historian, teacher, poet, ex-member of the Maładziečna City Council, whose efforts made it possible to set a monument to the victims of Stalinist repressions in the center of Maładziečna.



Tjeerd Royaards
Roman Protasevich confesses on TV in Belarus



Ezhi Yorsh, KGB-TV



Lilia Kvatsabaya



Liza Liankevich

“Who else feels like being inside a cage?
– Belarusians.

And what do Belarusians feel in prison?”

Olga Yakubouskaya
“Write letters to political
prisoners. May the warmth of
your hearts help them survive
through these dark times.”



5. VOICES OF BELARUSIAN CULTURE

Marharyta Laŭčuk [Marharyta Liauchuk], opera singer,
“It might be that the worse the situation gets, the faster the fracture will occur. And perhaps then it will all end, and we will win, and it will be a well-deserved Victory, obtained literally by blood.

Not everyone has realized yet what’s going on. What if we’ve been given all this so that everyone gets it. And they might. Belarus is a small country, someone's relative will be fired, someone's friend will be imprisoned, someone's business will be destroyed.”



Mikola Papiëka, poet, accused in the "karahod case",
«We’ll be sentenced to prison terms – we’ll serve them and be free, but they will have to live with these till their last days.”

Alhierd Bacharevič, writer,

“This revolution isn’t over. People have left the streets because the violence in the country is rampant. After all, the concentration camp has finally been built – on the ruins of the circus. Just the revolution has moved to a new stage. You can drive people to jail and make them stay at home, you can pretend that it's over, but the resistance in their heads only gets stronger. You can't imprison history in Akrestsina.”



6. INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels



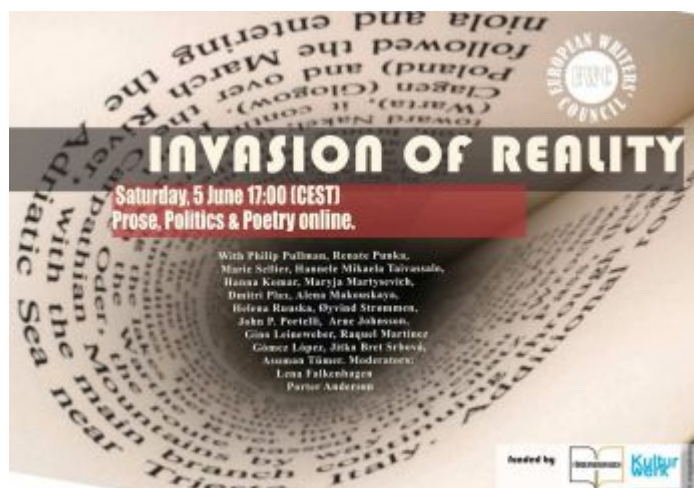
An Association of German Book Publishers and Book Sellers started a petition to release Raman Pratasievič [Pratasievich].




A well-known Russian street artist **Slava PTRK** is holding an auction in support of the families of Belarusian political prisoners: he is selling a photo print of the mural in Minsk, where in 2016 he symbolically painted barbed wire in the girl's hair.



The **European Writers Council** ran the Invasion of Reality event, having a section with Belarusian speakers talking about the attacks against the cultural and the literature scene in Belarus.



"**Belarus through the eyes of children**" – an exhibition of children's drawings in Stockholm.

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