



Belarussian
PEN
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Cultural Resistance in Belarus

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“Amidst the stream of doubts, concerns and fears, movement is what we have left. Don't stop! Breathe! Don't stop! Inhale-exhale! Don't stop! Move! Go!”

Vola Čajkoŭskaja

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1. PERSECUTION, CONVICTIONS, CULTURAL POLICY

Maksim Šeŭčyk was arrested for 15 days for a photo with a white-red-white flag, which he posted on his social media in the summer of 2021.

Aliaksej Busieł, sound director and musician from the band Favorite Mirror, detained on September 9 and arrested for 15 days, together with his mother, on September 24 was sentenced to another 15 days of administrative arrest.



The apartment of **Kaciaryna Pytleva**, a journalist, TV presenter and poet, who resigned from state television in 2020 and immigrated to work on an independent media project **Malanka Media**, was searched again, this time by KGB officers, who were surprised that someone had been in the flat before them. Pytleva faces up to 7 years in prison, charged under Article 361 of the Criminal Code – the same as Maria Kalesnikava and Maksim Znak. This article lists everything from harming the national interests of Belarus to an act of terrorism.

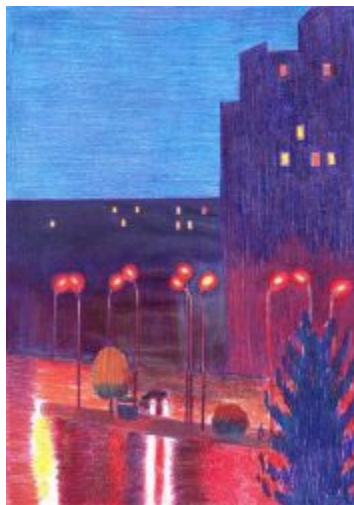
The World Association of Belarusians
"**Bačkaŭščyna**"
was eliminated on September 24
by the Supreme Court's decision.



2. LIFE OF THE IMPRISONED PEOPLE

Ihar Bancer is under risk of being sent from the open air prison to the penal colony.

.....



Stasia Mironcava,

"I have been doing alright at the factory lately. I sew belts to trousers ... and zippers ... and some other things at times. At first, every process felt so stressful, especially when you are expected to work fast. After all, you do your thing and pass it to the next person ... And now I sew fast, that's all. It's a matter of routine."

.....

Mikoła Papięka, poet, sentenced to two years in open air prison, spent his first 10 days in the correctional facilities in Mazyr. All the things he brought with him he can keep, he's treated without aggression or violence that he'd expected.

.....



Zmicier Šymanski, a bagpiper detained together with musicians of the Irdorath band on August 2, was transferred to the pre-trial prison in Valadarskaha street in Minsk. Before, he had been in the detention center in Žodzina, where he became seriously ill with COVID-19. It is known from Zmicier's letters to his relatives that he has almost no necessary items, like toiletries and warm clothes, and almost nothing but food and medication was received in the programs.

3. DISSENT AND CULTURAL ACTIVISM

The Belarusian Diaspora in Chicago organized a **Belarusian Festival 2021** for local communities.



Krystsina Banduryna, Belarusian poet, publishes her new collection of poems "Psalms and Dream Books" – in Russian translations.

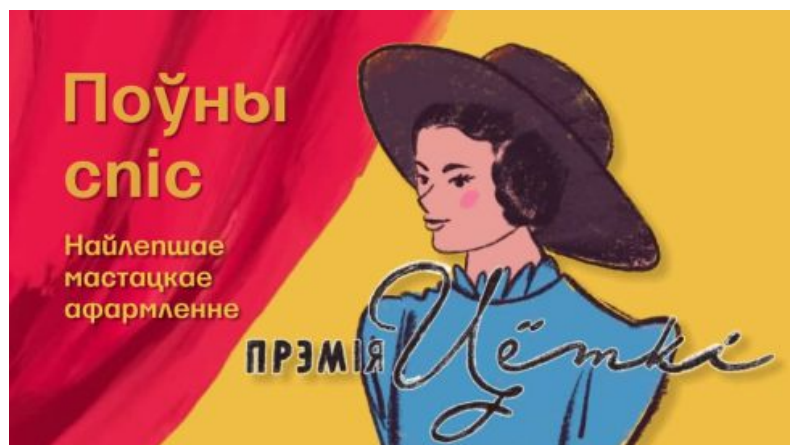
Northern Lights Nordic-Baltic Film Festival in Belarus, an annual event that offers the most recent and inspiring films from Northern Europe and Baltic States, takes place online on September 20-30.





A literary performance
«**Minsk can hear you**» took place
in the Minsk bar Butleger.

The complete list of books that can
be nominated for the **Ciotka Award**
has been announced. Co-founded
by the Union of Belarusian Writers
and PEN Belarus, it is given for the
best Belarusian-language book for
children and teenagers and
supported by the Local charitable
organization Viartannie
Foundation.



Maryaja Kalenik's
drawing from behind
bars

Frau mit automat – a theatre show under this name was prepared by representatives of the Brest creative space of the independent theater **Kryly Chałopa**. The premiere took place on September 25 in Poland, as such activity has become impossible in Belarus.



Dekoder, in cooperation with the **Fisher Foundation**, presents six essays by Belarusian authors that address the topic of the future of Belarus in literary and poetic, analytical or cultural form.

A group for children to study the Belarusian language has been set up in **Batumi**.



4. VOICES OF BELARUSIAN CULTURE



Vola Čajkoŭskaja, organizer of the Northern Lights Film Festival,

"Cinema embodies our unbreakable will and optimism, lust for life and justice. The right to be called people. Just like time, cinema flows, fast and slow, chaotic and structured but continuous. Like water sharpens a stone. Cinema is going on, and the festival "Northern Lights" is a fabulous magical conductor that charges everyone involved in it with creative life energy."

Maksim Žbankoŭ, culturologist, film analyst, journalist,

"Our cultural revolution hadn't just preceded the political one. The harmony of mass sentiments and soft strategies of cultural work created that "Belarusian style velvet cultural revolution", which took place in such a way that practically offended no one. And at the same time, it surprised almost no one – precisely because it was a revolution of small actions and private wording. But a political revolution hasn't happened yet."



5. INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Volha Hapiejeva
received the prestigious
Rotahorn Literary Prize.



Volha Šparaha presented her book
«Die Revolution hat ein weibliches Gesicht»
in Magdeburg. T-shirts with art by a
Lithuanian artist Jūratė Šližytė were also
sold at the meeting, the proceeds from the
sale will be used to help women political
prisoners in Belarus.

Svetlana Alexievich has received
Sonningprisen 2021.



Warsaw Freedom Orchestra
performed the song
“Peremen” in solidarity with
the band **Irdorath**.



A presentation of contemporary independent Belarusian literature took place in Prague during the largest Czech book fair “**World of Books**”.

A German bard **Wolf Birman** wants to pass the Ovid Prize awarded to him by the PEN Center for German-Speaking Authors Abroad on to **Maria Kalesnikava**.



A video interview with **Dzmitry Strocaŭ** and **Hanna Komar** at the festival Kapittel in Norway.

6. POLITICAL PRISONERS' BIRTHDAYS




In September, 3 political prisoners who have been somehow involved in the process of cultural development of our country, will celebrate their birthdays behind bars.

They are: **Maksim Znak**, lawyer, writer and musician (September 4),
Alaksandr Vasilevič, cultural manager (September 14)
and **Daniła Hančaroŭ**, lightning designer (September 27).

Letters and postcards (in Belarusian or Russian) can be sent to the following address:

For **Maksim Znak** and **Alaksandr Vasilevič**: CI3A-1. 220030, г. Мінск, вул. Валадарскага, 2

For **Daniła Hančaroŭ**: Тупма №4. 212011, г. Магілёў, вул. Крупскай, 99А

-  pen-centre.by
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