

A b s t r a c t s

The Belarus Case Violence, Power, Powerlessness

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The Belarus Case

Analyses, Interpretations, Consequences

Voter fraud, brutal violence against demonstrators, arrests, and repression: There should be no more doubts about the character of the Lukashenka regime. But why this escalation? And how should the European Union react: The "policy of dialog" with Minsk has failed. But the policy of isolation did not bring the desired results. The Belarus expert Astrid Sahn, together with her international colleagues Joerg Forbrig, Rainer Lindner, David Marples, and Arkady Moshes reveal the domestic causes, shed light on the power and powerlessness of the regime, reassess its sources of stability, interpret Russia's role, scrutinize the potential reactions of the EU, and discuss the development scenarios for Belarus.

Svetlana Aleksievič

"As Earlier, Nobody Wants to Go On Living"

Open Letter to President Aliaksandr Lukashenka

Since 19 December, we have been living in another country: arrests of demonstrators, detention of presidential candidates by the KGB, nightly searches for opposition members and dissidents. Just a little more, and we will have show trials. The trained masses will scream: "Crucify him!" Former colleagues will become traitors. Students will betray their professors, professors their students. Society is split. Does that not frighten you?

Stefanie Schiffer

Only Losers

Lukashenka, the People, and the Election

Manipulated elections have become the norm in Belarus under Aliaksandr Lukashenka. For a long time, support for the regime was considered so great that manipulation was not needed. That has changed. The people have lost their confidence in Lukashenka and his regime. The dictator reacted with repression and violence. The regime's brutal actions reveal its weakness. The forces of democracy and civil society in Belarus deserve solidarity and support. Civil society should move to the centre of a coherent EU Belarus policy.

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Ingo Petz

Creativity and Self-Assertion

The Cultural Scene in Belarus after “Bloody Sunday”

In Belarus, some of the strongest impulses for free-democratic values come from the alternative cultural scene. Despite the repression of the Lukashenka regime, it has captured for itself room creativity and subversion. The artists have not always understood their work as political. The repression after the December election could lead to a politicisation of the alternative cultural scene in Belarus.

Rainer Lindner

The Economy Needs Legal Certainty

The Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations Looks to Belarus with Concern

The course of the presidential election in Belarus and the actions against the opposition, German commerce and industry faces questions as to how to deal with this country. Belarus must urgently modernise its economy and is at the same time dependent on foreign investors. A policy of conditional cooperation is needed. For collaboration, reforms are essential.

Gemma Pörzgen

Image Cultivation for Authoritarian Regimes

PR Agencies, Journalism, and the Belarus Case

Autocratic regimes want to gain international sympathy. Western consultants help to develop the “country image.” One instrument to this end is the paid press trip. In times of sinking editorial travel budgets, they are gaining in importance. In November 2010, a Berlin PR agency acting on behalf of the Belarusian regime tried to demonstrate for German journalists the liberalisation of the country. The brutal actions of the Lukashenka regime after the election on 19 December 2010 demonstrate the absurdity of such efforts to create a better image.

Mark Brüggemann

Colonial Linguistic Heritage

Language and Nation in Lukashenka’s Belarus

The language debate in President Aliaksandr Lukashenka’s Belarus is a politically explosive topic. The struggle over how to interpret language history also concerns the point in time when Belarusian began its own development vis-à-vis Russian. In the debate over language in the present, two issues dominate: language policy since Lukashenka came to power and the competition between two varieties of Belarusian, a competition linked above all to orthography. All three discussions are of central importance for the self-understanding of the Belarusians as national and the political orientation of Belarus.

Christian Ganzer, Alena Pashkovich

“Heroism, Tragedy, Courage”

The Museum for the Defence of the Brest Fortress

The “Great Patriotic War” is an important point of reference in Belarus. The Brest Hero-Fortress Memorial assumes a central position in the mediation of a canonised view of history. Even today, official memory cultivates the image of the courageous Red Army soldiers who defended the fortress during the German attack on the Soviet Union for almost a month in 1941. Unpleasant topics such as captivity and genocide are completely suppressed in favour of the myth of masculinity and soldierly honour.

Andrea Despot, Eckart D. Stratenschulte

Europe’s New “Donauwelle”

The Danube Strategy of the European Commission

In December 2010, the European Commission presented a strategy for the Danube region. The goal is to improve the working, living, and environmental conditions in 14 countries. It is unclear on what basis the macro-region Danube was construed and whether this area is able to handle such a strategy. The connection to other strategies in the eastern partnership and the Black Sea synergy has not been worked out. But the strategy represents an approach to a new form of European governance. Its effectiveness will depend on whether the strategy succeeds in realizing some of its numerous activities.

Tanja Penter

The Verdict of the People

The War Crimes Trial in Krasnodar in 1943

In July 1943, the first public war crimes trial of the Second World War took place. Before the court stood Soviet citizens accused of collaboration with the German occupiers and treason. The staged proceedings, which had a strong impact on the public, were exemplary. The Stalinist regime used these trials as a means of cultivating its international image and as a weapon against political opponents. At the same time, the court-room proceedings gave the local population room for the need to exact vengeance and to articulate wartime traumas. By attending to the “pressure from below” and by putting considerable emphasis on proper legal formalities, they legitimised the Stalinist justice system and contributed to the re-Stalinisation of society.

Karlheinz Kasper

Authenticity and Modernity

Russian Literature in German Translation 2010

With 40 titles, the number of German first translations and new translations from Russian literature was at a high level in 2010. Most publications came from the publishing houses Heyne, Berlin Verlag, Aufbau, and Galiani. The trend of issuing new translations of known works of classic and modern authors on the basis of

contemporary criteria was clearly strengthened. Hanser and Manesse presented new translations of classic texts by Lev Tolstoy, and there are up-to-date editions of works by Daniil Kharms, Ivan Bunin, Vasilii Grossman, and Varlam Shalamov. The number of poetry translations is relatively large, and interest in the genre of short stories is growing. By contrast, the novel, which leans to a critical examination of the first decade of the 21st century and to post-modern anti-utopias, is rather poorly represented in terms of numbers compared to the amount of fantasy and mystery titles.

Fritz Pleitgen

“Model of Ability and Strength of Character”

The Lev Kopelev Prize Goes to Novaia gazeta

In Russia, the constitution guarantees freedom of the press. But everyday life for journalists is different. Often they are harassed, threatened, attacked. Violent attacks on journalists, even their murder, darken the image of a country that means a great deal to us. It is the journalist's duty to make public these crimes. The Russian newspaper Novaia gazeta raises its voice in this respect again and again. The editors do not let political or economic pressure wear them down. They are a model of journalistic ability and strength of character that Russia can be proud of.

Norbert Lammert

Truth and Democracy

Inalienable: Freedom of Speech and Freedom of the Press

There is no undisputable truth. The noblest task of the press is to remain aware of this insight and to maintain the preconditions for, and with that the vitality of, democracy – not with its own claims to truth, but with the struggle for and against claims to truth.

Dmitrii Muratov

“Fear Is Becoming Habit for Us”

Gratitude for the Lev Kopelev Prize

Journalism in Russia is sometimes a question of life and death. Journalists are being killed. Fear is spreading not only among journalists. There exists a fear of Nazis, followers of Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov, members of the Kremlin youth, and the security services. Corruption is the cause of death of numerous colleagues. And corruption is the only ideology of today's elite.