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Belarus Anarchist Partisans: Words in Court

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2022

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Cover Image: Igor Alynevich, Dzmitry Dubouski, and Dzmitry
Rezanovich on a ski trip together

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2022

Editor's Note: These are the translated pre-sentencing statements of three Belarusian anarchists in trials stemming from the 2020 Belarusian uprising. There are hundreds of other anarchists now imprisoned in Belarus.

For more information on the cases and information on how to support them and the Anarchist Black Cross Belarus, please see: edist.ro/solidarity

Solidarity is our weapon!

About the Trials

The court hearings were closed to public and journalists. The fourth accused comrade Siarhei Ramanau also sent the text of his speech for publication, but it has not reached us. Ihar Alinevich, Dzmitry Dubouski, Dzmitry Rezanovich and Siarhei Ramanau were accused of “terrorism, illicit trafficking of weapons and crossing the border” by the Lukashenka regime.

Minsk regional court Judge Valeryj Tuleika sentenced them as follows:

Ihar Alinevich: 20 years

Dzmitry Dubouski: 18 years

Dzmitry Rezanovich: 19 years

Siarhei Ramanau: 20 years.

Ihar Alinevich

13 December 2021

I was obliged to resort to those actions and tactics of the partisan struggle, which were conditioned by the social norm established in the society at that time.

I chose a form of action that resonated with the feelings and desires of many people in Belarus and beyond. So I don't consider myself guilty of opposing this system.

I participated and contributed to the struggle that a part of the society of this country started against the occupation regime, which is headed by a questionably elected president.

I took part in this struggle to support the rebellious Belarusian people and their aspirations to get rid of the dictatorship!

And I am absolutely convinced that these people, sooner or later, will achieve their goals in their struggle for a new and free Belarus!

Belarus will be free!

Tyranny will be defeated!

We anarchists have always been and remain with the people in their struggle against despotic power!

We'll be back!

Long live Anarchy!

Seeing all this, does the prosecution really think that a person who has a conscience and a moral core, who feels involved in the destiny of his comrades and like-minded people (who at that time were either in prison or under the strict pressure and control of law enforcement agencies), who is worried about the fate of his relatives and friends and the people in general, will stand aside and take no action?

And I, too, could not stand aside of what was going on in Belarus!

The forceful resolution of the problems and the emerged conflict between the people and the authorities have deprived me of any faith in the justice of the Belarusian state and its ability to ensure a due right to life and security of its own citizens.

It was the present authorities themselves, by their attitude to the people and violation of the rule of law, that forced me to go underground when the situation demanded it.

It was and is my moral responsibility to fight and oppose such manifestations of state terrorism and lawlessness on the part of law enforcers.

I pursued goals completely opposite to those of the accusation, namely:

- To fight the authoritarian system by all available means and means.
- To protect myself and other citizens from the aggression of the state and its enforcers.
- To express solidarity and support for the rebellious part of society.

I have come out on the side of the people who suffered from the actions of the authorities! On the side of the people and citizens, who had and still have well-founded doubts about the legitimacy of the current government.

Igor Alynevich, Resistance rebel, anarchist faction, Black Banner group.

The media have labeled us “Alynevich’s group” – or even “the gang” – but this label does not correspond to reality. We are called “Black Banner”, in honor of the federation of anarchists of the same name, who fought for freedom on this Earth back in Czarist times.

Each member of our collective is autonomous and capable of leading the struggle independently, which has been proven by risky deeds, prison sentences, life underground, and time... Each is an individual, with his own opinion and character. We make decisions as equals, without any leaders, and even more so, without ringleaders. If we are a gang, there hasn’t been such a gang yet. I am honored to stand trial in the circle of such worthy comrades.

Belarus Republic is a fragment of a totalitarian empire, which by the whim of history has existed for another 30 years. History teaches us that all splinters of empires, in their attempts to resemble the former might, inevitably degrade. Belarus is no exception, and now we are witnessing the complete strategic, economic and ideological bankruptcy of the regime. The regime has unmasked its predatory nature and is sliding more and more into outright barbarism. I see the events of August 2020 as the beginning of a social revolution that will eventually change not only the ruling elite, but the entire socio-political system. At the very least, we are talking about the removal of the post-Soviet bureaucracy from power, which will open up possibilities for a variety of social alternatives.

I could not miss these crucial historical times – I have been waiting for them for 20 years of my life – and decided to join the uprising. In a revolution, all roles are important, but each person must contribute according to his or her own strengths, qualities and skills. I chose to be a rebel of the Resistance.

What did I want? The main problem of any revolution, anarchists believe, is that new leaders take over the initiative. As a result, the slogans get emasculated, and the struggle is limited to a change in the elites and a small handout to the people. In the

conditions of autocracy I wanted to contribute to the further development of events in a decentralized way, so that the regime would fall under the onslaught of popular unity, and not through behind-the-scenes negotiations and concessions.

So my purpose in the underground struggle was not to intimidate the people, not to try to influence them, and not to destabilize an already destabilized society. On the contrary, I wanted to inspire people, so that through my courageous actions people would believe in their own strength. I wanted to liberate the revolutionary personality, to radicalize consciousness, so that people would overcome the usual patterns of subordination and authoritarian dogmas. I wanted people not to look into the mouths of the leaders, but to strive to take the initiative in their own hands and become bolder, more ambitious in their political desires and self-organized. In addition, it was important to divert the attention of the siloviki and punishers to the rebels of the Resistance and thereby give the revolutionary society more opportunities to strengthen the fledgling institutions of self-government. I wanted civil initiatives to network together into a nationwide Confederation and to put forward their own programme of political change, directed toward direct participatory democracy and civil self-government, without chieftains and intermediary parties.

The rebellion lives in hope. My hope, as an anarchist, is that in this social war, the will to freedom will prove stronger than slave fetters.

Long live the Revolution!

Long live decentralization and municipal Confederation!

Long live direct democracy!

And in the end, long live Anarchy!

Dzmitry Rezanovich

15 December 2021

tive where people are ready and willing to wage a decisive struggle against their oppressors, yearning for freedom.

Resistance to tyranny is an integral part of human activity. And if people are forbidden to act openly, they will be forced to “go underground”.

The protest movement will operate underground until the pressure of power on people is reduced, until the need to resist is no longer present.

This is the case with me. If the pressure of the authorities hadn't been exerted on the anarchist movement, if the authorities hadn't driven us out of the country and blocked our peacebuilding and non-violent activities, practices and initiatives within Belarus itself, then I wouldn't have had to go underground. Just as I probably wouldn't have had to resort to the actions I was forced to take in the autumn of 2020.

I came back and entered the cities of the country I had once left, not as a terrorist and not to intimidate the public.

I came in the very days when the state and its security forces were attacking their own citizens and terrorizing the population.

I came here, to Belarus, in the days of aggravation of the political situation. When the situation in the country was already destabilized (it was admitted by the authorities themselves and by many journalists).

When even the dubious president himself was directly and openly threatening people, saying the following: “Take no one else prisoner, but leave them (the protesters) at least without hands...” and similar threats.

And then, armed with a submachine gun together with his underage son (also armed), he actually declared war on his own people!

To say nothing of many other cases, not only of threats, but also of concrete actions of a criminal nature on the part of law enforcement agencies and the entire state system as a whole.

So I don't consider it necessary to justify myself and apologize to those who in one way or another work for the existing authorities in the so-called Republic of Belarus and knowingly participate in the state terrorism unleashed against their own citizens!

The only thing I can regret and apologise for is that I have not been able to give full and appropriate support to the uprising people and to all those people who, although not directly involved in the protests and struggles, were just as willing and eager for change.

I regret that I was not able to give all the support that the revolutionary struggle required, but only partially, and with the means that I had to use.

I also recommend that the prosecution and all those who are interested in and want to see me and the other accused anarchists sentenced to long years in prison, and all those who blindly carry out this and many other political orders from the government, think about what I am pointing out.

Think about what has happened and is happening in reality, who is the real threat to society and who is the real terrorist.

Think about in whose interests you are judging, who you are defending and who you are condemning!

Remember and know that prisons can't fix anything anymore. Revolutionary ideas and the desire of the rest of society to free themselves and get rid of a tyrannical regime cannot be banned and restricted.

Remember and know that none of the repressive measures applied by the authorities will have the desired effect of intimidating and subjugating the citizens. It is the other way round!

The authorities will sooner or later have to come to terms with the inevitable and step back and admit their impotence in fighting the popular resistance movement.

All the steps and reactions of the authorities only push society towards radicalisation – instead of submission and fear. Force and fear are good where slaves are raised, but they are totally ineffec-

I got interested in the political situation in the country and politics in general after the presidential elections of 2006. Around the same time I joined the anarchist movement. The idea of anarchism is based on the principles of freedom, independence, and self-rule. An anarchist is something in between a libertarian and a socialist. From libertarianism we take freedom, from socialism we take social justice. Anarchists are convinced that power in a republic should belong only to the people, not to a monarch or a group of oligarchs, for example. At the same time we are not supporters of presidential republic because this form leads to dictatorship of the president. The ideas of democracy are close to us. The only thing that probably distinguishes us from the typical democrats is a more critical view of the state as such. Anarchists are in favor of elected government where it is necessary, as well as for decentralization. In February 2014 I took part in the revolution in Ukraine on an ideological level. I am a Poleshuk and my roots are from the Stolín district of the Brest region. So I am not indifferent to the fate of Ukraine. But the main thing is that the Ukrainian people have the right to independence. And in 2014, after the overthrow of the Yanukovich regime, Ukrainians (except for Donbass and Crimea) for the first time were truly able to break away from the Russian state, from the power of the Moscow Kremlin after all!

Now they have unprecedented opportunities and in the next 20-40 years we will see what will come of this. In August 2020, I decided to show solidarity with the rebellious part of the Belarusian people, those who are fighting for New Belarus, as well as to support the non-system opposition democratic forces. I know all the defendants. We are like-minded. In what follows I'm only going to talk about my own motives in the current socio-political situation in the country. The security forces, mainly police and internal troops, after the voting of August 9 and the following days of protest, have been demonstratively beating and maiming peaceful protesters who dared to express their disagreement with the results of the presidential re-election. I believe that the protests

in Belarus, especially in the first days, were moderately peaceful. I was on the Kiev Maidan and I know what I'm talking about. Taraikovsky was shot in Minsk without any reason and the murder left an indelible mark on me. After all that happened in the first days of protest across the country, I could not stay away, much less support or somehow justify the actions of the authorities. The rally FOR Lukashenko on August 16, at which sovereign Lukashenko himself spoke, showed how many citizens really supported him – it was a serious marker, as analysts say. My moral principles regarded it all as a wake-up call for a determined struggle for a new future without the odious dictator. But the ends do NOT justify the means, and the main criteria of the struggle for me have been adequacy and justice, and avoiding human casualties. And as of today, analyzing my past, I have the peace of mind that there is no human blood on my hands. Our anarchist group is called the Black Banner. We are members of Resistance whose task is to free Belarus from Lukashenko's despotism and Putin's control. Unfortunately, we were detained by the border guards. By the way, the same border guards who have recently failed to notice thousands of trespassers in the border zones and strips for six months. At the Khomenki outpost of military unit 1257 we were treated worse than foreign illegals. And in the end, the workers of the State Security Committee "molded" us into "terrorists. Even though true terrorists are in government agencies and institutions, giving orders to security officers to maintain an iron fear in society. All totalitarian dictatorships are based solely on fear. Today it is called state terrorism. I do not trust the courts. A closed trial deprives us of the opportunity to openly convey our position to the people. Article 289 says that the case is political. That is why I think that the decision on us has already been made and the high court will only announce the order from above. You will forgive me, of course, but the reality is this. We will return to this sensational case at some point. This has to stop. Others will come after us. And enormous prison terms

Against yourselves, your patrons, you will never apply the laws and criminal proceedings under which you judge and imprison the opponents of the current government.

The closed hearing of our case is one of the clear examples that confirm my words. For in this way we have been deprived of the right to a fair and public hearing by an "impartial court". Not to mention the fact that from the very beginning, as soon as we were detained, procedural rules were violated and not respected, and violent methods, physical and psychological pressure were used during the interrogation.

(It is well known that a trial which is not sealed by procedure is not sealed by justice!)

Similarly, I can say with certainty that the KGB, courts, state-run mass media and the like, in the realities of the Belarusian state, are mere tools for preserving and holding on to power.

We, however, just like any other ordinary people from the nation, caught up in the millstones of their system, are used by these tools as a means to frighten others.

The courts, like many other state institutions, are involved by the illegitimate authorities in their policy of terror. There is no other word for it.

Accordingly, our trial is a show of execution, a show ordered by the current authorities.

The voluntary participation in such a "trial" of those who took the side of the prosecution and continue to serve the illegitimate government, automatically puts them on a par with those whom the people rightly and justifiably called punishers, occupiers and oppressors!

Such epithets were given to representatives of the regime for the inhuman treatment, torture, violence, illegal/criminal actions, which caused injury, trauma and even death of people in the days before, during and after the "presidential election 2020", as well as throughout the existence of the Lukashenko regime and its one-man rule and domination over the Belarusian society.

There might be more such examples, in which law enforcers and committee members (GGBists) themselves can be involved. It is not for nothing that KGB has long been called the “Committee of State Lawlessness” and there is a reason for that! Such a name they received for various criminal cases like ours. With biased and false accusations. For the peculiar cynicism and cavity with which they fawn on the dictator, in their servitude to him, they have reduced themselves to a condition in which the concepts of valour and honour, of service to the welfare and security of the people have disappeared!

I also believe and am convinced that the entire judicial system has long been ineffective in ensuring that truth and justice prevail. The courts and representatives of the so-called “justice” are in principle not called upon to look into the root causes and sources of the deeds being committed. To take into account the prevailing situation in the country at the time when the acts imputed to us were committed and what preceded it. They should!

All the links in the chain of events need to be considered, because the blame for what I did lies not with me or with the three other anarchists accused, but with those who sowed the distrust between the people, those who created and increased the split in society. This guilt also lies with those who, under the guise of alleged love and concern for the people, thought only of preserving their own power over that people.

This guilt lies entirely with those who decided to maintain their dominant position over the rest of the Belarus society by force and bayonets.

But such guilt and its true perpetrators are not exposed by courts and are not punished. Because this would automatically call into question the existence of both the courts (the judiciary) and the state as a whole, as well as their usefulness to society in protecting the rights and freedoms of individuals and the security of citizens.

will not stop the revolution that has already happened in people's heads.

Long live anarchism!

Long live free independent Belarus!

Dzmitry Dubouski

15 December 2021

I, Dzmitry Dubowski, am a supporter of rebel anarchism. During the Belarusian uprising I represented and acted for the “Black Banner” faction. I address these words to the three brave and proud comrades-in-arms, the anarchist brothers Igor, Dima and Sergey, sitting next to me.

By the will of fate and circumstance, I have to say this word here in court. It is not my last word – as the judicial power wants it to be. It cannot be my last word simply because any action always sounds louder than words – it will be heard forever, regardless of the court's decision and regardless of where each of us is.

It does not matter any more which of us was involved in these actions, or if we were involved at all. The Belarus revolution has written down and engraved us in the history just as the rebelling people wanted to see us – as partisans and insurgents who stood up for the revolution and freedom, as daring people, who defied tyranny!

So, dear anarchist brothers, all that is left to us now and what we can preserve is this very image of us – the revolutionary insurgents and anarchists of the cause!

I am very glad that in your words and appeals here in court, you have proudly and with dignity supported and spoken for the Black Banner faction . I also want to express my respect for your decision to boycott most of the sessions of this trial. It was the right and justified decision on your part.

I, in turn, stayed in the courtroom out of curiosity. I wanted to see and analyse how it works and whether it works at all, in which direction the scales of “blind” goddess of justice Themis will tip and how is this show played out.

Though, it was clear from the very beginning that, being in the captivity of the Lukashenko regime, one cannot rely on justice and humanity of the courts!

Therefore, I have no doubt that the court will find us guilty and impose the most severe sentences requested by the prosecutor to each of us.

Next I will speak out and say why, how and for what I and the other three accused anarchists were put on trial, with a completely trumped-up and custom-made accusation from the authorities.

Our fates and penalties had been decided long before our trial began. The trial itself is a mere formality and a performance which has nothing to do with justice and even less to do with fairness.

As soon as I and the three other accused anarchists found ourselves in the hands of the KGB, the investigation department decided to use our detention for their own purposes and interests. In particular, to gain preferential treatment from the authorities for the capture and disclosure of an allegedly dangerous group of terrorists.

But the truth is that there was no merit of KGB in our capture and detention! All that the KGB was capable of was a vile and cynical accusation against us. In this case, without even presenting tangible evidence for this, without having thoroughly understood who and how actually committed the arson of the facilities and vehicles mentioned in the accusation, the KGB simply fulfilled the political order of the authorities, which wanted to suppress the protest movement in the country. The authorities needed a weighty pretext to justify the legitimacy of such measures.

And such a pretext was found in the form of combating and countering extremism and terrorism. Accordingly, real terrorists were also needed, or they had to be invented or appointed from

those who had been captured (detained and imprisoned) by the associates of the Lukashenko regime.

In this regard, when the four of us were detained near the Ukrainian border, the KGB, with the support of the state media, immediately and without regard to the so-called “presumption of innocence”, began to purposefully and deliberately create and promote the image of terrorists out of our personalities.

The acts of destruction of property, were presented as “acts of terrorism”, to intimidate society; to openly broadcast this narrative about terrorism and anarcho-terrorists to the Belarusian public.

All this information dumping and speculations related to our detention were aimed at creating an even greater atmosphere of fear in the country, in order to further pressure the society, to undermine trust between the people who rallied and united in the fight against the illegitimate authorities. But primarily, perhaps, it was done in order to create an illusion in the eyes of the public about the legitimacy and necessity of harsh measures and repression against protesting citizens, initiatives, independent media and many others.

I believe that if in those very days of October 2020 we had not been detained by border guards, someone else would have been appointed as terrorists, or, in the worst case, the KGB and other security agencies would have carried out provocations and acts of terrorism themselves instead, in which case tragic consequences would probably not have been avoided!

There is no doubt that the security services are capable of engaging in this kind of provocation. Take at least a recent example: the case of so called conspiracy to overthrow the government and liquidate its leadership and the president himself where a provocateur was among the conspirators.

Let us not forget that an explosion in Minsk underground in 2011, which caused real victims, still did not close the question of possible involvement of people in uniform in organization of this horrible act of terrorism.