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INTERNATIONAL

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Composition dedicated to the phenomenon of the Zhirovichi Icon of the Mother of God

Zhirovichi: a place of our strength and faith

Every year on May 20th, Orthodox believers celebrate the miraculous appearance of one of the main Christian shrines in Belarus — the Zhirovichi Icon of the Mother of God. This year, this date was celebrated with solemn liturgies, a procession and the *Zhirovitskaye Svyata* open festival.

The Zhirovichi Icon of the Mother of God is one of the 100 most significant Orthodox icons in the world. And it is also the smallest of the revered images of the Virgin — only 5.6x4.4 centimetres. However, this tiny image has great power, which helps to heal the sick and gives hope to thousands of believers. The legend about the appearance of the icon in 1470 says that the icon was twice revealed to young shepherds in the forest, in the crown of a blossoming wild pear tree. A church was built on the site of the appearance of the icon, where an image decorated with a precious curtain was placed. The church was burned down around 1520, but the icon miraculously survived. Subsequently, a monastery arose near the newly rebuilt temple.

The holy image of the Zhirovichi Icon of the Mother of God unites the Belarusian people, strengthens unity and mutual understanding. Even more than five hundred years after its appearance. The Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus, Metropolitan Veniamin of Minsk and Zaslavl consecrated a composition illustrating the moment of the appearance of the icon after the celebrations on the occasion of the appearance of the Zhirovichi Icon of the Mother of God.



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United we stand

The President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko met with participants of the meeting of the Council of the CSTO Parliamentary Assembly in Minsk on May 18th

According to the Head of State, Belarus — currently presiding in the organisation — attaches particular importance to the parliamentary dimension as an integral part of the CSTO success, its improvement and further development

“The first and main task is the alignment and harmonisation of national legislations. There are no complaints about our Parliamentary Assembly. You offered many model laws to national parliaments, and some of them are actively used in Belarus and other countries,” Aleksandr Lukashenko said.

The President named the observation function during election campaigns in the CSTO member states to be equally important. “Given the degree of negative reviews of the conditions of preparation and execution by biased political institutions, the impartial assessments of our assembly play a positive balance. That means we stand up for each other. This certainly has a positive effect on maintaining peace and security in the organisation’s area of responsibility,” the Head of State stressed.

Aleksandr Lukashenko stated that the negative trends, which have been repeatedly talked about over the past year, are becoming a foreign political reality. NATO has been building its military presence and offensive potential near the western borders of the CSTO. They have been conducting large-scale exercises and modernising the military infrastructure at an accelerated pace, including in neighbouring countries.

“Some states have turned into a testing ground for the destruction of old Western hardware and testing new weapons. After Finland’s recent entry into the alliance and Sweden’s impending accession, we have once again witnessed the expansion of the North Atlantic bloc. These actions have put the world on the very dangerous brink of a global conflict... Despite the rapid decline in living standards and deteriorating economic prospects in European countries, the West is escalating international tensions and openly admits, with the voices of some politicians, that it is preparing for war,” the President stated.

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that the West justified its actions by ‘Russia’s intervention, aggression’ in Ukraine. However, the Head of the Belarusian State considers this explanation untenable.

The Belarusian leader pays special attention: Ukraine remains the central arena of confrontation, the battlefield on the European continent. In the wake of the military clash there all the most important spheres of interstate relations — political, eco-



nomie and humanitarian — have been violated.

“Through the efforts of our Western opponents, the UN and the OSCE are turning into institutions of pressure and confrontation, they are becoming minions of Western states. We consider such actions short-sighted and irresponsible,” the President said.

Aleksandr Lukashenko accused OSCE of inaction,

“If the OSCE is true to its name of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, if such a conflict is raging in Europe, well, it is time to get together at the highest level, to look at each other and to make some decisions. At least talk if we are unable to arrive at any decision. Many times the Russians and I suggested meeting and discussing problems. It was even before the launch of the special military operation. Zero effect. They do not need any discussion. They need one thing — war. And they are doing everything to push us into this war in order to unleash a war.”



Vyacheslav Volodin, Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Chairman of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Nevertheless, according to the President, Belarus remains committed and open to dialogue aimed at strengthening global and regional security. Belarus persistently calls for an end to confrontation and a return to a peaceful solution, “I emphasise: the dialogue should be mutually respectful and equal.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko said that Russia was ready to sign peace deal with Ukraine, “The Russian MPs were directly involved in this process from the very first day. We suggested negotiations. Let’s talk and stop the war. We hosted three rounds of talks. Then Zelensky decided he wanted more air or something and moved the talks to Türkiye. No problem, let it be Türkiye. They put a draft agreement on the table. If Russia were to read it now, it would go crazy. It was absolutely disadvantageous for Russia. But Russia was willing to sign it then... I have this draft on my desk. As soon as Russia agreed to the peace initiatives, to the agreement, they threw the draft into a bin. People may not know it. Nonetheless, the experts who were involved are aware of it... Instead of accusing us of confrontation, the expansion of this conflict, they’d better return to the negotiating table and start working on a new document, not the previous one [that was discussed during several rounds of Russian-Ukrainian negotiations at the initial stage]. The war must be stopped.”

The Head of State also touched upon the topic of the so-called Ukrainian counter-offensive, which is often mentioned in the media, “I see this ‘counteroffensive’ as the biggest disinformation hoax. From my

point of view, no ‘counteroffensive’ is going to happen. It’s just crazy. Launching the counteroffensive with one to five on the front in terms of hardware and manpower is just madness! But they persist with riling up Ukrainians in order to continue this confrontation and bog us down in it. These are how things are on the front today. We see it.”



Imangali Tasmagambetov, Secretary General of the Collective Security Treaty Organization

Aleksandr Lukashenko once again stressed the need for a mutually respectful and equal dialogue, “What preconditions you are talking about? We must sit down at the negotiating table and work out all sorts of conditions there... We should concentrate our efforts on forming a new system of international relations, if we look far ahead. It should be based on universally recognised norms and principles of international law, but not on some ‘rules’ that the West is trying to force on us.”

The President added that most countries, which include the CSTO member states, see the best prospects for the development of a multi-polar world.

Belarus intends to continue to promote the principles of a

just and multi-polar world, to help develop reliable guarantees to ensure both collective security and stability, and the security of each member of the international community.

Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasises the important role of unity in the CSTO to preserve the sovereignty and independence of its members,

“I am sure that the motto of the Belarusian chairmanship ‘Through solidarity and co-operation towards peace and security’ chimes in with aspirations of all members of the CSTO. In this regard, the question of the unity in the organisation cannot be ignored. During its chairmanship Belarus aims to take the necessary steps to boost solidarity of the CSTO states. We need to remove existing disagreements if we want to strengthen the organisation, ensure security and stability in its area of responsibility.”

The Belarusian leader noted that he often discusses this problem with the President of Russia, “We don’t want the sanctions imposed against us to be extended to your countries because of your co-operation with us. We absolutely don’t need this. It will only make things worse. Nevertheless, I want to say that we very much hope that these attempts to tear us apart will not affect our unity. Economy is the cornerstone. So is the market.”

The Head of State noted that a number of countries in the post-Soviet space are facing various problems and challenges.

“They are trying to take us apart. As an experienced person, I want to ask you: be careful, do it without any fuss, do not fall for these tricks! You should take care of your own interests, the interests of your peoples. Do not allow (first of all, you, parliamentarians) any rupture at this crucial moment in our history. Global superpowers are trying to re-divide the world, and their eyes are on us. We should hold on to each other. This is our policy. We invite you to follow suit. I think there is no other way to preserve the sovereignty and independence of our states,” Aleksandr Lukashenko said.

An international conference on Eurasian security problems, which will be held in Minsk in autumn 2023, is one of the issues discussed in the Belarusian capital.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

Minsk-Managua: reaching a new level of co-operation

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, met with Nicaragua's Minister of Foreign Affairs Denis Moncada Colindres. Welcoming the guest, the Head of State emphasised, "When I think about Nicaragua, I always consider that it is such a remote country that is yet very close for us. Evaluating our relations, I must say that we have an immense field of work. We have a lot to do to bring our relations to the highest level."

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that there are already examples of such co-operation between Belarus and Latin America,

"Take, for example, Cuba, Venezuela, other Latin American states with which we have very close political, trade and economic relations. I think we need to follow the same path in

our relations with Nicaragua... We have everything in place today to build good, close relations. And even the legendary leader of Nicaragua, whom we all love and respect in Belarus.

I will ask you to convey best regards from the Belarusian people and me personally to Daniel Ortega. We admire his political activities."

The President assured that Belarus has everything that Nicaragua needs, and even in abundance.

"While building our contacts, we need to create a legal framework for bilateral co-operation in the economy. This is a matter of time. I think if we get down to this now, we will be able to develop this legal framework and build deep economic contacts within a year. We are

ready for this," the Belarusian leader noted.

The Head of State suggested that Nicaragua's Minister of Foreign Affairs analyse how Nicaragua can benefit from co-operation with Belarus and outline areas of co-operation.

"We are absolutely open for you, no topics are off limits. We will take your proposals on board," the President said.

The Nicaraguan Minister of Foreign Affairs, in turn, conveyed warm words to the Belarusian leader from the President of his country Daniel Ortega, "Big greetings from Comandante Daniel Ortega, brotherly greetings and best wishes... Thank you very much, Mr. President, our friend, our comrade. Our entire delegation welcomes you with all the warmth, with all the goodwill."

IMPORTANT ARRANGEMENTS

Denis Moncada Colindres shared some details to journalists after meeting with the President of Belarus, "Mutual support and solidarity between the countries was confirmed, issues were discussed on the implementation of joint projects with the possibility of signing specific contracts for the supply of equipment and in other areas. First of all, we single out the sphere of technology, agriculture, co-operation in the field of education and mutual trade. Now we are talking about concretising the projects that we intend to implement between the two countries. The main goal is to create framework conditions, the necessary contractual and legal framework that will make it possible to implement these projects and further reach the implementation of other promising areas of co-operation."

While answering the question from media representatives about the possibility of the Belarusian side's participation in the implementation of a large-scale project for the construction of the Nicaraguan Canal, Denis Moncada Colindres said that they also discussed co-operation in the development of infrastructure projects at a meeting with the Belarusian leader, "I would like to note that the Nicaraguan Canal and Development Project is running; it has not been put on hold. Therefore, of course, Belarus could also take part in infrastructure projects, including the project you have mentioned." According to experts, the Nicaraguan Canal is considered by the Government of this country as an alternative to the Panama Canal. Its full name is the Grand Interoceanic Canal. It is designed to connect the waters of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans and significantly relieve maritime traffic. The waterway is expected to be 278 kilometres long and over 500 metres wide. The project provides for the passage of 5,100 ships a year through the canal.

Belarus and Nicaragua are currently co-operating on the issue of supporting candidates for elections to UN bodies and other international organisations. Nicaragua is a member of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking, which was established at the initiative of Belarus at the UN. The country is a co-sponsor of the Belarusian resolution to improve the co-ordination of efforts to combat trafficking in persons. In 2019, the Nicaraguan delegation co-sponsored a resolution promoted by Belarus on the Long-Term Consequences of the Chernobyl Disaster.

However, the legal framework is still in the process of formation and has only a few international treaties. Accordingly, the mutual trade turnover is relatively small and last year amounted to \$800,000. Trade and economic ties are based on deliveries of printed materials, spare parts for cars and tractors, tires from Belarus. In the structure of imports, the largest share was occupied by the supply of coffee, bananas and knitwear.



Managua

A number of bilateral documents were signed following the talks between Belarusian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Aleinik and Nicaraguan Minister of Foreign Affairs Denis Moncada Colindres in Minsk. In particular, the general agreement between the two governments on the provision of export loans and the agreement on co-operation in education were signed. Belarus and Nicaragua intend to further develop the bilateral legal framework. For example, the countries are now working on draft agreements on trade and economic co-operation, promotion and mutual protection of investments, establishment of a joint committee on trade and economic co-operation, as well as on the abolition of visa requirements.

The Head of State Aleksandr Lukashenko has received Belarusian Ambassador to Russia Dmitry Krutoi with a comprehensive report on Belarus-Russia co-operation

The President outlined a number of key talking points: they include the state and prospects for trade and economic co-operation, contacts with Russian regions, the implementation of the Union State programs as well as logistics issues related to the supply of domestic goods abroad, integration processes within the Eurasian Economic Union.

"Economy is the cornerstone of everything. As economists, we know that there no relations without economy. I am aware of the statistics, I know that our trade has increased, and we have finally reached a trade surplus. In other words, our trade is balanced. I am interested in dynamics, trends.

You remember very well as you worked in the Belarus President Administration and in the government what was the situation in trade with Russia. We always bumped into some barriers, obstacles, etc. What has changed in this regard? It is clear what has changed. Yet, you know it better as you can look at it with a fresh eye, and you work on the ground. And you can simply list those areas where changes have taken place, be it changes for the better or for the worse," Aleksandr Lukashenko said.

The President continued and outlined another topic for discussion, "We have always said that our success in Russia depends on its regions. I see that you travel a lot across Russian regions. And this is right. Governors

'Neither Russia nor Belarus could be strangled by the West'

come to us. We receive them at the highest level. How are the dynamics here? What is the attitude there, on the ground, to Belarus and Belarusian products? Generally speaking, what is the image of Belarus in this vast Russian space?"

The Head of State noted that he and Russian President Vladimir Putin meet a lot, "We do this not to look at each other, although this is also important, the Presidents' attitudes are always important. In fact, we have tried to help governments, including you, to untie some knots."

Aleksandr Lukashenko asked if all the necessary decisions were made on the part of Belarus, if there were any questions for the Presidents and governments.

"According to government reports, there are almost no problems. I am not buying this. I see that some problems, some poke holes remain. Sometimes it is about bureaucracy. Who is to blame for this? The day after tomorrow I am meeting with Russian President Putin in Moscow, and I want to use this occasion to discuss and remove those problems that should not have been in our relations," the Belarusian leader emphasised.

The President also touched upon the topic of countering Western sanctions,

"It is quite obvious that neither Russia nor Belarus could be strangled by the West. This is largely due to the fact that Russia and Belarus decided to close

ranks and move forward together. We use Russian infrastructure, like ports, railway, road transport...

I know that you have delved into this issue, and you must supervise the development of our port capacities in Russia. The railway communication. What are the bottlenecks here? We agreed with Russia that we will expand them. Naturally, road transport. Coastal transportation, and so on and so forth."

Dmitry Krutoi, in turn, drew attention to the fact that it was possible to reverse the trend with a negative balance in trade with Russia in 2022, "For the first time in history, we had a surplus in trade both in goods and services. In the first quarter of this year, the situation improved even more and the aggregate surplus hit \$896 million."

By the way, the volume of trade between Belarus and Russia in 2022 amounted to \$45.76 billion (114.3 percent compared to 2021), exports — \$22.94 billion (140.2 percent), imports — \$22.82 billion (96.4 percent). The balance is positive — \$127.4 million.

Russia is the main trading partner of Belarus. The share of the Russian Federation last year accounted for 59.5 percent of the value of foreign trade in goods, 59.9 percent of exports, 59.1 percent of imports (in 2021, these figures were 49, 40.9 and 56.6 percent, respectively).

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

Defence from a comprehensive perspective

MILEX 2023 impressed with its scale: 500 samples, 7900 square metres of exposition area and over 30 foreign participating companies

Our country can demonstrate all this even in the face of unprecedented pressure from the collective West on Belarus and its partners in the field of military-technical co-operation. The national defence industry is moving at a fast pace: out of 500 vehicles, systems, instruments and equipment sets deployed at the 11th international arms and defence technology expo MILEX 2023 in Minsk Arena, 144 are brand new and are being shown for the first time, while another 64 have been modernised by Belarusian specialists. At the same time, there is no doubt about the combat capability of the new products, because our engineers studied the experience of world armed conflicts in order to improve certain indicators, moreover, the samples were assembled from Belarusian components — this is an ideal option in the context of import substitution.

By Maria Krushevskaya

Shkval multiple launch rocket system

Deliver the most accurate, fast and powerful strike — these are the characteristics without which no modern weapon can exist today. The Grad MLRS remained the leader among such weapons for a long time. This system appeared back in the USSR and after that it became known to the whole world, because it replaces several howitzers and can eliminate an entire enemy unit. Bel-

arusian engineers took a step further and brought the Grad to perfection. The Shkval multiple launch rocket system, developed by Volatavto, is just the same equipment.

“In this system, everything except the chassis (they are Russian-made) is made in our country. One of its advantages is an automated targeting system that reduces human errors to

zero. Moreover, guidance is carried out directly from the cockpit, which is very safe in an armed conflict. The equipment, like Grad, can use all 122 mm calibre ammunition at a distance of over 40 kilometres. The reduction in the execution time of the fire mission is another advantage. According to the latest tests, it will take 2 minutes 46 seconds from the moment the target coordinates are received,” Volatavto engineer Dmitry Lapko explained.



The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, “Minsk is once again hosting the representative forum which provides a unique opportunity to see the best examples of military and dual-use products not only for professionals but also for a wide range of audiences. This time, the international arms salon is held in the year when the State Authority for Military Industry marks 20. Therefore, the Belarusian section will showcase the most advanced samples of the domestic defence sector made with the use of high technologies and artificial intelligence, and also innovative civilian products that have been manufactured due to the diversification of some industries.”

During greetings to the participants and guests of the 11th edition of the international arms and defence technology expo MILEX 2023 on May 17th, 2023

T-72BM2 TANK

The upgraded T-72BM2 tank was also presented at the MILEX 2023 exhibition for the first time. It was this tank that was shown to the President of Belarus in October 2022, when Aleksandr Lukashenko visited the Obuz-Lesnovsky training ground in the Brest Region. Then the Head of State demanded more active modernisation of the tanks in service. The T-72BM2 is indeed an indispensable comrade in battle. It can fire more efficiently than its predecessor, due to the installation of a multi-channel gunner’s sight, which allows day and night to hit the enemy with a 125 mm cannon using armour-piercing sub-calibre, high-explosive fragmentation and cumulative projectiles, as well as guided missiles.

“Compared to the standard T-72B, its autonomy and security have also been increased. The commander and gunner can fire, they have the ability to work independent-

ly with the weapon system. Due to autonomy, the resource of the main engine is preserved, the maintainability of the machine is increased,” the representative of the 140th Repair Plant said.

The television and thermal imaging surveillance devices installed here also help to hit the target. Armour is a special advantage of the T-72BM2: dynamic protection of the hull and turret, anti-cumulative screens in the stern will reliably protect the crew, components and assemblies of the vehicle.



Chekan и Lovchiy

Unmanned aerial vehicles are the weapons of the 21st century. This small-sized equipment today is capable of performing any task in combat:



from reconnaissance to delivering crushing blows. Therefore, it is fair to say that drones have become a headache for the military around the world in the last couple of years. In Belarus, they not only know how to successfully eliminate ‘enemy’ drones, but also produce their own. The two newest models demonstrated at MILEX 2023 are IUBAK-25 Chekan and IUBAK-70 Lovchiy of the 558th Aircraft Repair Plant. “Chekan is a disposable strike system, a kamikaze drone. It can strike at a video capture or

at a pre-entered coordinate within a radius of 25 kilometres. Inside is a high-explosive fragmentation warhead, and the UAV is launched from a catapult. This model is in high demand today. Therefore, we have practically completed the main tests and are engaged in the development of its mass production,” head of the GT department for UAV of the enterprise Viktor Borodin said.

Lovchiy is a reusable device that can both conduct reconnaissance and strike. Its control radius is 70 kilometres, it is equipped with a laser rangefinder, a thermal imager and other optics that allow one to accurately determine the target. In addition, the drone can be in the air for up to seven hours! The blow is delivered with anti-tank aerial bombs, and it can drop eight shells at a time. The company plans to develop a small-sized bomb for this device. Remarkably, both UAVs are completely domestically assembled.



State Secretary of the Belarusian Security Council Aleksandr Volfovich,

“The defence industry has become one of the most important and high-technology sectors of the economy. In the context of the unprecedented economic and political sanctions, the products of the national defence sector are competitive and in demand on the international arms market. Belarus pursues a policy of good-neighbourliness, openness and mutual trust. MILEX 2023 features the best achievements of our country’s military science.”

Defence Minister Lieutenant General Viktor Khrenin,

“It is noteworthy that parameters of many products of the Belarusian defence industry are on par with well-known world analogues. Most of the products on display at the expo are already in service with the Belarusian army. A number of them are going through trials. Over 5,500 units of various weapon systems, military and special hardware were bought and shipped to the army last year. At the same time, over 500 units of new models of weapons and military hardware were supplied by Belarusian manufacturers alone.”



According to tradition, the exhibition had an extensive business programme in addition to the demonstration of weapons. Its key event was the 10th international scientific conference on military technology co-operation in the area of defence and security, the use of dual-use technologies MILEX.INNOVATIONS 2023, which was attended by 150 experts from the defence sector of the economy in various areas and aspects of the development of the military-industrial complex. They studied the issues of creating systems to counter high-precision weapons, electronic warfare, radio, electronic and radar intelligence, considered the development and modernisation of weapons and modern trends in military medicine and pharmacology. In addition, a joint meeting of the leaders and members of the national parts of the Interstate Commission on Military-Economic Co-operation of the CSTO and the Business Council at the CSTO MKVEC was held within the framework of the exhibition with the participation of the Council of the Collegium of the Military-Industrial Commission of the Russian Federation on issues of military-economic (technical) co-operation in the CSTO format.

Route to the sweet life

From 180 to 300 tonnes of products per month with a minimum of stocks: how state support helped Krasny Mozyryanin get out of the crisis and increase production

There were ups and downs in the biography of Krasny Mozyryanin confectionery factory. And this is a story about how a competent approach, the support of the state and colleagues helped one of the oldest enterprises in the Belarusian food industry to cope with the crisis. Today, it continues to delight consumers with its products, implementing development plans and setting new goals.

By Ruslan Proleskovsky

Trip from import

In 1913, the Narovlya landowner Gorvat built a small plant for processing fruits and vegetables grown on the estate. In the future, the semi-handicraft enterprise became a candy factory, bringing good profits. The factory has faced a lot of hardships. It was literally reborn from the ruins after the Russian Civil and the Great Patriotic Wars. However, the period of 2008-2011 was the golden time for it. About 500 tonnes of products were produced per month. The trucks that came for it lined up in long lines.

Later, the confectionery market conditions changed a lot. The expansion of imports began and, as a result, serious problems with the sale of products. For this and a number of other reasons, by 2020 the factory was going through hard times. There were difficulties with paying salaries amid falling sales, debts to suppliers of raw materials grew. The bleak prospect of bankruptcy loomed on the horizon...

Brothers in industry

By decision of the Council of Ministers, a management company was appointed for Krasny Mozyryanin. It is noteworthy that the salt workers were the first to take the confectioners in tow. Mozyrsalt helped to pay off a significant part of the debts, partially modernise the line for the production of jelly marmalade, and buy equipment for the production of marshmallows on agar-agar.

Then Spartak — colleagues in industry — became the managing company. With its help, an air conditioning system was installed in the finished product warehouse of the Narovlya factory. Enterprises have established the sale of each other's products in their retail chains. Spartak also helps to ensure the logistics of supplies to the capital and the Minsk Region, which reduces the costs for Narovlya colleagues. And highly qualified specialists of the Gomel factory always provide advice, sharing their experience and skill sets.

With the help of sanctions

Executive Director Aleksandr Pilyak headed the enterprise in July 2020. Prior to that, he worked in the banking sector for a long time. Today he admits that he did not imagine the scale of the problems that Krasny Mozyryanin was then experiencing when he took up a new position.

“There was 180-tonne monthly production volume, warehouse stocks — almost twice as much. At the same time, the number of employees is 400 people. I had to make painful decisions to optimise the state. I note that the specifics of confectionery production lies in a significant amount of manual labour. Therefore, the reductions did not affect those who directly produce products,” the director shares figures.

It was not without the ‘blessing in disguise’ factor. In this case, we are talking about the effect of Western restrictions. True, not the one that those who introduced them counted on. Due to the departure of many foreign manufacturers, there was a redistribution of markets in Russia and Belarus. A significant part of the counters was freed from imports. At the same time, Krasny Mozyryanin significantly increased exports, which now account for almost a third of production. About 100 tonnes of delicacies are shipped monthly to Russia, Israel, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Kazakhstan. Last year, deliveries to the foreign market brought almost two million dollars. This is a good result for a small business. After all, a couple of years ago, the volume of exports barely exceeded \$1 million.

Before and after

The complex of measures taken has borne fruit. Now Krasny Mozyryanin produces about 300 tonnes of products per month. In fact, all of it is shipped at once. Carry-over inventory is kept to a minimum.

According to the results of the last year and in the first quarter of the current year, all the main indicators were met. Accounts payable and receivable decreased significantly. The average salary in the enterprise today is Br1440. This is more than double what it was three years ago. This contributed to the reduction in staff turnover.

The enterprise has been actively developing industrial tourism since last autumn. Almost 2,700 people have already used the opportunity to see how their favourite treats are made. However, every month the number of applicants is growing.

In the process of implementation

The factory does not forget about the prospects, continuing to solve everyday production problems. The enterprise is included in the state programme to overcome the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. Thanks to this, this year Krasny Mozyryanin will receive Br3.6 million to install a new line for the production of replicated iris. An engineering company has been identified to accompany the investment project, and a tender is being prepared for the purchase of equipment. It is planned to launch the line by the beginning of next year. The expected effect is an increase in the current volume of production by almost a third. As well as the creation of 15 new jobs. This is a lot for a small Narovlya.

There are also plans to increase the production of marshmallows on agar-agar. There are all preconditions and reserves for this. If earlier 1–2 tonnes of goodies were sold per month, now it is already six. And the available capacities make it possible to increase this figure by more than three times.

“We are very grateful to everyone who helped us in difficult times: both our colleagues in the food industry and the state represented by local authorities. In addition to its contribution to the economy, the enterprise has an obvious social significance. Today it is difficult to imagine Narovlya and Krasny Mozyryanin without each other. Many people work here for generations, forming continuous labour dynasties. Therefore, the enterprise assists the city in landscaping and gardening, and the development of social infrastructure. All this, like our products, we do for people,” Aleksandr Pilyak says.



Ivan Yarivanovich



BELTA



Ivan Yarivanovich



On the Augustow Canal

The Republic of Belarus is located in the centre of Europe and is one of the 15 largest countries in this part of the world. Belarus is often called a 'blue-eyed country': there are thousands of lakes, rivers and protected forests. But the country is interesting not only for its unique nature. Each region of Belarus has its own modern industrial giants, amazing historical sites and sights. Belarus consists of six regions: Brest, Vitebsk, Gomel, Grodno, Minsk and Mogilev. Minsk — the capital of the Republic of Belarus — retains an independent status and is not part of any regions. The MT presents the project called *Belarusian Land Treasures*. Today we will go to the Grodno Region — the largest region of the country, which has large natural, economic and intellectual resources. Every corner of the Belarusian land is its own special world, a separate page in the book of Belarusian history. The Grodno Region is especially highlighted in this book, whose colour, unique landscapes and preserved monuments of history and architecture win the heart and leave an indelible impression in the heart of everyone!



GRODNO REGION

Belarusian land treasures

The President of the Republic of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,

"The contemporary history of the region dates back to September 20th, 1944, when the region was created with the centre in the ancient city of Grodno in the most difficult time after the liberation of Belarus from the fascist invaders. Your fruitful work and sincere love for your small homeland raised it from the post-war ruins, made it a wonderful and prosperous land, which the whole country is proud of today... The Grodno Region is famous for its traditions based on hard work, hospitality and cordiality. From time immemorial, this is the land of energetic, strong-willed, enterprising, active and talented people."

From the congratulations of the Head of State on September 20th, 2019

Historical insight, interesting facts

The history of the Grodno Region is rooted in hoary antiquity. Its territory has been inhabited by people since the Late Paleolithic Period. The most ancient sites were located on Svityaz Lake, near the villages of Chereshlya (Novogrudok District), Nesilovichi (Dyatlovo District) and Zblyany (Lida District), near the mouth of the Kotra River.

It is known that East Slavic tribes (Dregovich, Krivichi, Volynians, Drevlyans), West Slavic (Mazovians), East Baltic (Lietuva), West Baltic (Yatvingians) lived on the territory of the Grodno Region at the end of the 1st — beginning of the 2nd millennium. The Slavic colonisation of the region begins in the second half of the 1st millennium.

Volkovysk is the most ancient city of the Grodno Region. The first mention of the city in the Turov Chronicle dates back to 1005. The first major cities on these lands were Novogrudok (1044), Grodno (1128), Slonim (1252), Lida (1323).

Grodno — the centre of the region — is often given the title of the most beautiful city in Belarus. Since ancient times, when the first settlement of the Slavs arose on the high bank of the Neman River, it played an exceptionally important role in the fate of the Belarusian lands. This is reflected in the appearance of the city. In addition to palaces, temples and fortifications, Grodno also managed to preserve its ordinary buildings, and with it the very spirit of the past.

Population

At the beginning of 2022, the population of the Grodno Region was 1,006,614 people, including 769,845 people in urban areas, and 236,769 people in rural areas.

The largest cities in the region are Grodno (357,493 people) and Lida (103,479 people).

Geographical position and natural wealth

Grodno Region is the smallest region of the country, its area is 25.1 thousand square kilometres. In the west it borders with Poland, in the north — with Lithuania.

The region is characterised by a flat relief. Only in the southeast is the Novogrudok Upland with the highest point — Castle Hill (323 metres above sea level).

80 rivers flow through the Grodno Region. The largest of them are Neman River, Viliya River, Shchara River and Berezina River.

There are 34 lakes in the region, the largest are Beloye Lake, Rybnitsa Lake, Molochnoye Lake, Svityaz Lake, whose beauty was praised by Adam Mickiewicz in the poem of the same name, is rightfully considered the most beautiful and cleanest in Belarus.

The Augustow Canal, which connects the Baltic Sea with the Black Sea, is one of the pearls of the region. This is an outstanding hydraulic structure of the 19th century, one of the largest canals in Europe, claiming to be included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. More than 50,000 tourists visit it every year.

On the territory of the region there are 15 nature reserves, 95 nature monuments of republican significance. A lot of pristine nature has been preserved in the Grodno Region — such large forest areas as Nalibokskaya, Lipchanskaya, Grafskaya Pushcha, as well as the world-famous Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park, which is often called the last primeval forest in Europe. Here you can see the symbol of Belarus — the bison, as well as many other species of rare animals and, of course, the unique beauty of landscapes.

The Grodno Region has an advantageous recreational and geographical position, has a rich natural and historical and cultural heritage and a developed transport system. In addition, a significant part of the region belongs to the visa-free zone. All this defines the region as a popular tourist destination.

Economic development

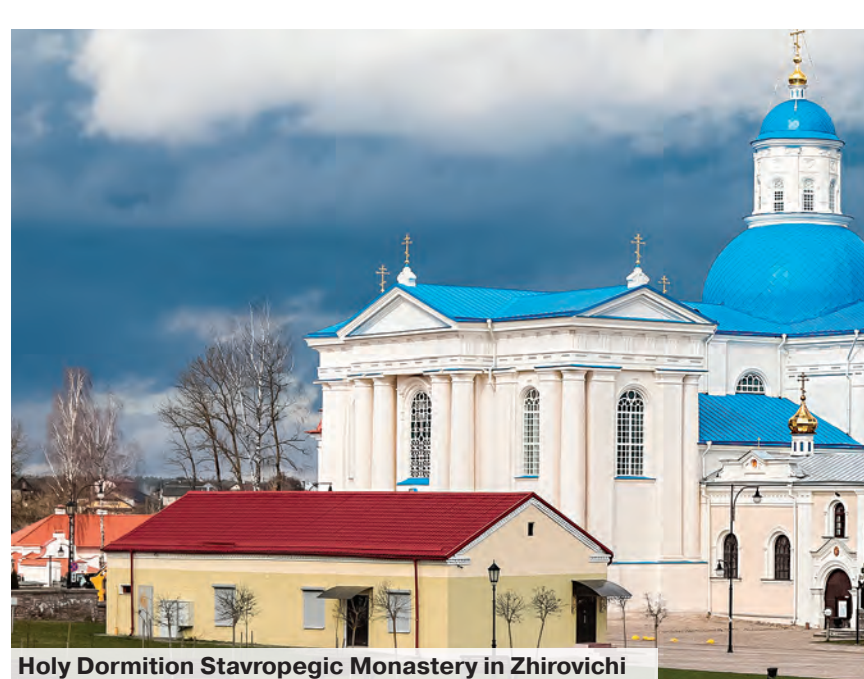
Grodno Region is dominated by the production of food, beverages and tobacco products.

Among other significant industries are the production of chemical products, wood-working, light industry, mechanical engineering, the production of building materials, and the production of electricity.

Grodno Region occupies 11 percent of the country's industrial output. The entire republican volume of production of caprolactam, ammonia, powdered milk formulas for children, almost the entire volume of cord fabric for tires, ammonia, nitrogen fertilisers, almost 70 percent of hosiery are concentrated here.



At the Grodno Azot enterprise



Belarusian NPP



At Molochny Mir enterprise

In early May of this year, China's National Computer Virus Emergency Response Centre and Chinese cybersecurity company 360 published a report stating the involvement of the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in organising 'colour revolutions' and cyber attacks around the world. As stated in the document, the CIA has overthrown or attempted to overthrow at least 50 legitimate governments abroad causing turmoil in related countries for decades. Whether it is the 'colour revolution' in Ukraine in 2014, the 'sunflower revolution' in Taiwan island, China, or the 'saffron revolution' in Myanmar in 2007, and the 'green revolution' in Iran in 2009. Protest activity is based on young people mobilised through the Internet. This 'revelation' stirred up the information space and gave rise to a huge number of comments, although by and large nothing new was announced. The conclusions of Chinese researchers about the role of Washington and the Internet as a mobilising tool in the 'colour revolutions' are just the tip of the iceberg in the process of rebuilding the modern world and the American doctrine of maintaining its own dominance.



Caught in the net

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,

"Any colour revolution makes a country weaker and its people poorer. There have been no examples of people having a better life after such unrest. The main remedy for this trouble is well-known: intensifying and strengthening ties and integration in all formats: bilateral, the EAEU, CIS, CSTO. First of all, I mean co-operation in economy, security, and human contacts."

During an interview with Belarusian and foreign political observers on November 13th, 2020

By Nikolai Buzin, Doctor of Military Sciences, professor, Assistant to the Chairman of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly

Who owns the information...

The issues of managing individual and mass consciousness as an element of achieving one's own goals in international politics have deep historical roots. Back in the 1960s and 1970s, the United States, convinced of the futility of attempts to directly defeat the Soviet Union, set out to destroy the enemy from within. To do this, the emphasis was placed on psychology, the promotion of Western values, the manipulation of information and the tools of 'soft' power. The entire research, financial and technological potential of the 'democratic' world was involved in order to restore sole control over the world and its resources.

The manipulation of consciousness was based on post-modern technologies for creating and managing conflict situations. The foundations of this scientific direction were laid by Herbert Marcuse, Martin Heidegger and other scientists. The instrumental component of their ideas was further developed after World War II. In 1968, the theoretical developments of scientists were embodied in the form of a 'student revolution' in France, which resulted in the resignation of President Charles de Gaulle.

The essence of the process was very clearly formulated by the 37th US President Richard Nixon, who, with Anglo-Saxon pragmatism,

declared, "One dollar invested in propaganda and information is more valuable than \$10 invested in the creation of weapons systems, because the latter is unlikely to ever be used in practice, while information works hourly and everywhere."

Subsequently, all theoretical developments were generalised and implemented within the framework of the technology of 'colour revolutions' by Professor J. Sharp of Harvard University in 1973. In terms of content, it is an information operation carried out using non-classical methods of struggle ('methods of nonviolent action') in order to change the conservative political regime to a more loyal analogue of it, while simultaneously depriving the elite and the people of the opportunity to independently determine the path of development of the state.

Maximum effect with minimum cost

It was the 'colour revolution' that became Washington's dominant tool in the process of 'democratisation' of the rest of the world in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The US State Department and the CIA have been key components of implementation for decades.

Cyberspace, which absorbed previously independent areas, was the most important area through which a complex impact on the individual and society as a whole was carried out: information, communications and entertainment. This process has become global, and the ability to manipulate

consciousness has increased significantly with the advent of the global information web — the Internet.

Events in the post-Soviet space, North Africa, the Middle East, and Hong Kong have become vivid examples of the effectiveness of the 'colour revolution' technology. It is natural that the provisions in the field of operating in the virtual space are reflected in the governing documents of the United States.

Hybrid attack

A special place in this list is occupied by the Force XXI concept of Pentagon expert Robert Bunker (1996), in which the theatre of operations was divided into two elements — traditional space and cyberspace, as well as the theory of hybrid warfare by Frank G. Hoffman (2007).

The basis of the tools of hybrid warfare are elements of 'soft' power, which allow achieving not so much physical destruction (overthrow) and material damage, as changing behaviour, recognising an acceptable option for the development of the situation at the rational-mental level of perception.

Long before the open phase of confrontation, three forms of influence are carried out: information processing of the population and the national elite of the state in order to discredit the traditional system of values and national culture; economic and financial expansion, formation of dependence on external loans; encouragement of national separatism.

Within their framework, the provisions of the theory of virtual constructions are implemented, when, as a result of purposeful manipulation of information, an individual begins to act on

the basis of artificially created fictitious needs, not realising the fact of harm to himself or herself and the state. 'Source material' is needed for the effective implementation of this scenario — a society with a low educational level, average needs, incapable of creative thinking and amenable to informational influence.

Thus, it is the information and psychological impact through cyberspace, but not the military component, that is decisive in the framework of a hybrid war.

Beneficiaries and victims

It is no coincidence that the information space today has become an arena of fierce confrontation. Moreover, the operation in this field is carried out in two main areas: information-psychological and information-technical (software-technological).

The objects of influence within the framework of the first are the individual, society and the state as information-psychological units capable of perceiving and processing information.

The goal of the operating side is to form the required worldview, principles, ideals, behaviour patterns. In fact, to reformat the individual and group consciousness, taking into account psychological characteristics.

For this, the mass media, formal and informal associations, secular and religious movements, and other tools are used to implement the stages of psychological programming. It is this direction that is decisive in terms of the final effect and allows you to implement the function of 'manipulation of consciousness'.

The second component — information technology — is aimed at developing technologies that allow operating in cyberspace,

influencing information, infrastructure, and data arrays.

Hacker attacks, malicious viruses, data fraud and theft of confidential data are all elements of information technology impact.

However, they are a consequence of the global informatisation that engulfed the planet at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, at the origins of which stood the United States. The development of technology spurs the market and allows one to create a profitable environment. States with less scientific and technological potential are forced to give away real wealth (natural resources, tangible assets) in exchange for a virtual product.

The United States and NATO legally equated a cyber attack with an armed attack, and classified cyberspace as one of the areas of military operations. This opens a new page in the history of interstate confrontation.

The mentality of the population is the object of destructive information and psychological impact, and the task is to damage the spiritual and moral life of the people, their historical and cultural memory, worldview, moral ideals. The most important goal of this process is the formation of a consumer society, devoid of an internal core and unable to resist the information and psychological expansion.

Under these conditions, the state system must have the necessary tools and capabilities to neutralise modern and future security threats in the relevant area. They are in the national arsenal.

As for the assessments and conclusions of Chinese researchers, this indicates that Beijing is clearly aware of who poses a real threat to its interests and declares its readiness to defend them.

By **Aleksei Avdonin**,
an analyst with the Belarusian
Institute of Strategic Research

Right to justice

According to the classical definition, capital is not money, but the amount of surplus value formed by the labour of a wage worker or machines. It is labour that creates value. A simple example: there is a conditional raw material that costs \$1, but labour transforms it into a commodity for \$10. It is true that in capitalism it is not the mere hard worker who appropriates the bulk of the money, but the owner of the capital, because of which an uneven exchange is formed — inequality!

It is against this injustice that the working masses have been waging their struggle for the past 350–400 years. Hence, the importance of, for example, the holiday of May 1st. This is the day of the victory of the working people for their rights, the right to an even distribution of surplus value.

A socially oriented state (focused on the needs of its people) withdraws surplus value through taxes and directs it to the development of society: provides free education and medicine, creates public infrastructure, develops science and civil institutions.

The market (non-social) model of the state-corporations is focused solely on the maximum extraction of surplus value from hired workers through their harsh exploitation and the creation of individual benefits for capital owners.

The problem of a socially oriented state lies in the growth of the final cost of goods and services generated by such an economy, and the impossibility of price competition with the second model of the state.

The problem of the second model is constant social conflicts due to unemployment, poverty, hunger, anger, hatred and envy. But the advantage of such a model is its high competitiveness in the world market due to the constant cost reduction amid underpayments to ordinary workers, the replacement of manual and mental labour by machines.

The struggle between models of the future

The processes that we are witnessing in the modern world (the global confrontation between the West and the East) are precisely the struggle between two models of the future of mankind.

On the one hand, this is a model of wild capitalism with all its rigid ideas and forms: colonialism, new Rome, new metropolises, slaves, wars, destruction of competitors, the idea of creating ‘prosperous zones’ for the golden billion. Simply put, the few will live well at the expense of the many. On the other hand, this is a ‘capital for the people’ model, when surplus value is distributed within society, but not appropriated by a group of those in power.

Understanding these processes, one can clearly see what the Anglo-Saxons and their vassals represented by the European Union are fighting for and what Belarus, Russia, China, the countries of the Middle East, Latin America and Africa are fighting for. We are all fighting for justice! We do not want to become slaves and live under oppression!

Terrible nightmares of the West

The ghost of the world socialist revolution has woken up and is roaming the planet. What will the global economy be like?

The current geopolitical and economic processes have been described more than once as cardinal changes in the world order and the global economy. But what will the world be like in the future, and most importantly, what will the economic structure look like? To answer these questions, we should make a short digression into the history of the formation and development of capital.

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,
“Nations do not understand how the ideology of the global international project of sustainable development can be compatible with such ‘achievements’ of today, as an unprecedented famine, epidemics, moral degradation and rampant abnormal values. There has never been anything like this in world history! Such development can hardly be called civilisational. As is the fact that the world spends trillions of U.S. dollars on killing people and ruining nations, rather than on creation. This is the deepest crisis, a crisis that is all-encompassing, multifaceted. In many ways it is man-made – aimed at destroying rivals. We have never seen anything like this in history as well. It is not yet known what the way out of it will be, but everyone understands that the philosophy of the world order will change. The world will be completely different. This is the essence of this historic moment.”

During Address to the Belarusian people and the National Assembly on March 31st, 2023

Not in favour of the golden billion

The West is now fighting in Ukraine not against Russia, it is fighting against the ideas of a just society that are alien to it. It is for this reason that China and other countries of the world support Moscow, since the essence of this struggle is the struggle for the ideas of a just society, a fair distribution of surplus value within society.

Former US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo clearly defined back in 2019 that the main enemy of the United States is an ideological enemy. We are talking about the Communist Party of China with its ideology of social equality.

Further dissemination of the ideas of social equality and fair distribution of surplus value will lead to the fact that the question of the need to destroy oligarchic groups in the form of owners of banks, factories, newspapers, steamships will arise. Oh, they would certainly not favour such an outcome! They want to continue to live at the expense of others and live as long and as well as possible.

We ourselves choose the model of our future development.

It can be slavery with illusions about the beautiful life of a prosperous burgher, freedom of speech and other ‘goodies’ of a capitalist society. Or we will force the capitalist West to adopt a different model for the whole of humanity, which will be based not on finding the maximum surplus value in favour of the golden billion, but on equal distribution among all members of society.

It is clear that they are not someone who will back down. They want war! For them, war is salvation from their internal civil wars.

However, the Anglo-Saxons no longer have another option. As feudalism was replaced by a new formation in the form of capitalism, so capitalism will be defeated and give way to a just society, social equality.



Bolshoi Theatre

Bright, brilliant, shocking and enchanting... Bolshoi... It's all about it — about the National Academic Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre of the Republic of Belarus, which boasts dozens of the highest level of productions over its 90-year history — both its own original Belarusian and classical foreign and Russian works. Every performance at Bolshoi, whether opera or ballet, becomes an event! The audience, however, never ceases to enjoy stories that do not lose their sharpness and relevance along with new brilliant productions — about the fatal beauty Carmen from the opera of the same name or about the ardent tragic love of the Crimean Khan Girey for the Polish princess Maria from Pushkin's poem *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*, translated into the language of dance.

By Vladimir Likhodedov

Happy birthday!

But let's turn the pages of the calendar and travel back 90 years ago — on a warm sunny day on May 25th, 1933. It is this date that is considered the birthday of the Opera and Ballet Theatre, which boldly and forever separated from the first State Drama Theatre (which later became the Yanka Kupala National Academic Theatre, although it continued to share one stage with it for several more years, before the appearance of its own building.

Joyful, excited faces... Women with curls twisted in hairdressing salons — in elegant dresses, with clutch bags and pumps — arm in arm with companions in white starched shirts with ties, in tailcoats or strict monochromatic suits. Then, without exaggeration, the entire cream of the Belarusian intelligentsia gathered to show the first production of the new theatre.

There were so many emotions — joy, awe, excitement — they overwhelmed the hearts of the artists who were supposed to go on stage that evening and present the *Carmen* opera by Georges Bizet to the audience!

'A new centre of Belarusian socialist culture'

The opening of the theatre was quite an event! Almost a whole page in the main Belarusian newspaper of that time called *Rabochiy* (published by the Central Committee of the CPB, from 1937 — *Sovetskaya Belorussiya* [Soviet Belarus], now — *SB. Belarus Segodnya*) was devoted to the emergence of 'a new centre of Belarusian socialist culture' — the National Academic Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre. Among the materials were also welcome addresses from the Academy of Sciences of the BSSR, the Central Board of the Union of Artists of the BSSR, the Art Sector of the People's Commissariat of the RSFSR, the People's Commissariat of Education of the RSFSR, as well as congratulations from colleagues.



Larisa Aleksandrovskaya during the decade of Belarusian art in Moscow. 1940



A scene from the *Mikhas Podgorny* opera, timed to coincide with the opening of the new building of the Opera and Ballet Theatre. 1939.



The *Carmen* opera at the opening of the Opera and Ballet Theatre. 1933. The picture was used in the *Zvyazda* newspaper in 1933.

Rivalry between Langbard and Lavrov

Today Bolshoi Theatre is located in a majestic building on the Parizhskaya Kommuna Square in the centre of Minsk. And in the 1930s, architects and styles fought for the right to build a structure on this site. Initially, the avant-garde artist Georges Lavrov won the competition for the construction of a high-status project. Then, the first stone of the future theatre was laid on Troitskaya Hill on the site of the old market and the rickety wooden houses adjacent to it in 1933. Lavrov's plans were grandiose, but they were not destined to come true.

But even according to the project of the architect Iosif Langbard, the building

in the style of constructivism was built for a long time — almost five years — but not without nuances. Military parades were supposed to take place on the platform in front of the theatre, and the main facade could be decorated according to the symbols of that time — sculptures of a Red Army soldier and a worker.

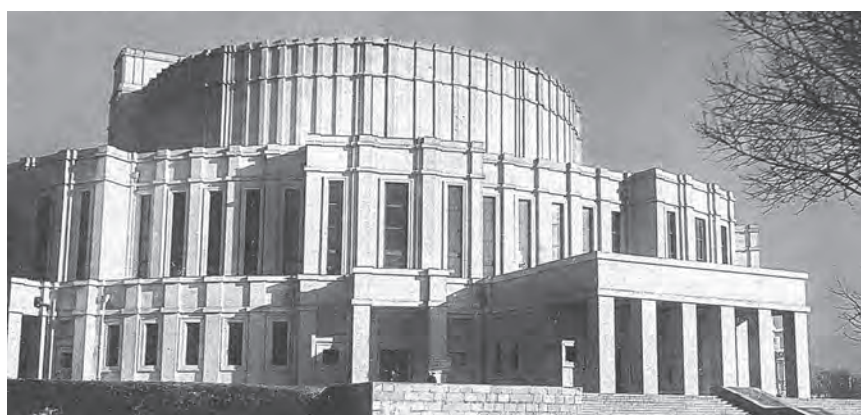
During World War II, the auditorium of the theatre was destroyed by an air bomb, the German invaders turned the dilapidated building into stables, and the decoration was looted and taken to Germany. But still, the theatre survived, and in the post-war years many musicians and artists found shelter in the preserved office premises.

By 1948, the theatre was completely restored, and tiered balconies appeared in the auditorium. Around the building they laid out a park, also designed by Langbard.

'Under the roof of your house'

Oh, how did the opera and ballet dancers wait for the move to their own cozy and spacious house, where everyone would have a place in the dressing room, the costumes would be placed in the dressing room, and the scenery would be made in the art workshop...

It is symbolic: the opening of the new building, which took place on March 10th, 1939, was timed to coincide with the



The building of the National Academic Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre of the Republic of Belarus. 1939.

The President congratulated the staff of the National Academic Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre on the 90th anniversary of its founding.

The Bolshoi Theatre is a bright pearl of domestic and world classical culture, the Head of State noted. "Your legendary stage is a living embodiment of the immensely talented Belarusian people, their keen sense of beauty and sincere musical soul. Numerous opera and ballet stars were born here and made their first steps, famous choreographers and directors created their excellent performances, international celebrities were honoured to perform," the congratulatory says.

This professional bar, raised high by several generations, is maintained with dignity by the modern theatre team, the President emphasised. "I am convinced that you will continue to work selflessly for the sake of enrichment of our cultural heritage and prosperity of our dear Motherland," the Belarusian leader stressed.

Aleksandr Lukashenko wished the personnel of the theatre creative inspiration, big premiers, sold-out performances in their native country and abroad, good health and wellbeing.

According to the press service of the President

showing of the first national opera *Mikhas Podgorny* by composer Yevgeny Tikotsky to a libretto by poet Petrus Brovka. It became a truly folk-heroic musical drama in the production of the theatre. The audience experienced the pre-October Belarusian village in the process of the rise of the revolutionary movement. The heroes of the first Belarusian opera were the freedom-loving laborer Mikhas, whose role was played by tenor Vasily Lapin, and the peasant girl Marysya, represented by the incomparable Larisa Aleksandrovskaya.

At the decade of Belarusian art in Moscow

A year later, the first national production of *Mikhas Podgorny*, as well as the *In the Forests of Polesie* opera by the Honoured Artist of the BSSR Anatoly Bogatyrev, and *Kvetka Shchastsia* [The Flower of Happiness] opera by the honored art worker Aleksei Turenkov were shown with great success at the decade of Belarusian art in Moscow. The first Belarusian ballet *The Nightingale* by the honored artist of the BSSR composer Mikhail Kroshner was also presented there. Classical movements, combined with some elements of folk dance, brought courage and novelty unusual for that time — they had a bright national character.

At the end of the decade, Larisa Aleksandrovskaya was the first among Belarusian artists to be awarded the title of People's Artist of the USSR. In addition, the recognition of the merits of the entire theatre team and its exclusivity was the assignment in 1940 to the theatre of the title 'Bolshoi'.

The theatre is ready to surprise!

All these years Bolshoi corresponded to a high level. And by the 90th anniversary, the theatre has accumulated a weighty creative backlog — dozens of brilliant classical and modern productions of operas and ballets, participation in international competitions. What is the touring life of artists! There are practically no places left on the globe, wherever the National Academic Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre of the Republic of Belarus come to give concerts. Recall such innovative projects as the *Evenings of the Bolshoi Theatre at the Radziwill Castle* festival, the *Ballet Summer* festival, *Big New Year's Ball!* Despite its advanced age, Bolshoi is youthful and full of the most unexpected ideas and bold plans. The theatre is ready to surprise today! As they say, let us wait and see, and then we will definitely show and tell you.

Photos from the personal collection of Vladimir Likhodedov

People with unlimited possibilities

The story of how Belarusian Paralympic athletes fight for the truth and won

Might makes right. When Belarusian and Russian athletes were literally kicked out of the Paralympic Games in Beijing last year, everyone was in exactly the same condition — as if someone crept up behind and hit us on the head with all his might. But the matter was not limited to this: the officials of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) continued to inflict vile blows at the behest of the Western masters. They hit where it hurts the most. So, soon they initiated the meeting of an extraordinary General Assembly, at which they brazenly and cynically adjusted the constitution of the organisation to their wishes, and then temporarily suspended the membership of Belarus and Russia in the committee in violation of all moral and ethical norms, spitting on conscience and the code of justice.

By Sergei Kanashits

We are not allowed to play with the scammers anymore, they have all the cards marked, but our Paralympic athletes had no other choice — they boldly got involved in the fight for their honour, dignity and justice. For good and for truth. Having done a huge amount of work, we prepared and submitted documents to the IPC Appeals Tribunal, which, having met in Dubai at the end of April, heard a voluminous and comprehensive report from the Belarusian side. There's nothing to be said: those sitting took our side! This is a very serious victory, now the IPC is obliged to restore the rights of the Belarusian Paralympic Committee. However, one should not relax: they are still in no hurry to allow Belarusian athletes to participate in international competitions: officials again want to put this issue on the agenda of the next General Assembly in Bahrain, which is scheduled for the end of September this year. Chairman of the



not care that they break the fate of innocent disabled athletes, is simply amazing.

We believe we don't have to explain how exactly the International Paralympic Committee has fabricated its sanctions and decisions. They had no qualms about it. An eloquent fact that says a lot: the IPC office is located in Bonn, Germany, in the building that used to house the US Embassy. Such a subtle allusion to very thick circumstances. Just listen to Yelena Gvai to make sure you even more clearly imagine who we have to



Belarusian Paralympic Committee Oleg Shepel, chief specialist for international relations Yelena Gvai and three-time Paralympic champion Svetlana Motorina told the details of this epic battle at the National Press Centre. However, to be honest, what we heard made us feel hot and cold: the arrogance and cynicism of completely savage officials of the IPC, who do

deal with, "The decision not to allow our athletes participate in international competitions was made at the Extraordinary General Assembly by the Executive Committee of the International Paralympic Committee. According to the new constitution, which was promptly adopted right there, this body was given absolute rights — it is impossible



to appeal against the decisions of the executive committee, such a mechanism is simply not provided for in the constitution [it is about democratic values and their application only when this is beneficial to the democrats themselves]. Therefore, this issue was not considered in Dubai."

To be honest, the evidence base of the IPC was not only weak, it did not exist at all! This was forced to be recognised by the Appeals Tribunal, which emphasised that the lion's share of the charges against us was not based on assumptions and conjectures: we believe, it is very likely, it may well be... This is wild jurisprudence, right? Level 100! Moreover, we have armor-piercing arguments against this fabulous rubbish: we have not violated either the constitution of the IPC, or the code, or any other legal norms. Our athletes are not politicians or soldiers, they are simply athletes with disabilities who want to compete, while the Paralympic Committee is a public organisation. Fortunately, we were heard. Or rather, they had to do it. A many-hour meeting, four breaks for consultations, but the decision was made, and it is not subject to appeal — Belarus regained its membership in the International Paralympic Committee. Our country gnawed it with its teeth. Nevertheless, so far only the battle has been won, not the

war. Now it is important to consolidate the success of the General Assembly in Bahrain and achieve a return to the international arena. Oleg Shepel assures that we will not give up and will defend the truth, "We have much more chances for a positive result than at the Extraordinary Assembly, where the membership of the Belarusian Paralympic Committee was suspended. Because at that time representatives of 110 countries out of 180 members of the IPC took part in the meeting. Of these, 54 were against us, 45 were in favour, and 18 abstained. However, it should be taken into account that many of those who were on our side (the countries of the post-Soviet space, Iran) simply did not receive visas and could not fly to Germany for the Assembly [let's talk about democracy again]. Of those who abstained, some at that time had not yet fully understood the situation, while others, according to our information, were, let's say, financially interested — they promised to allocate funds to the account of their National Paralympic Committees. So, I think the Belarusian Paralympic athletes have great chances to return to the international arena — visas are not needed for Bahrain."

Today there is a split and a complete violation of all the norms of logic and law in the Paralympic movement (as well

as in the Olympic movement). Many are finally beginning to realise that sport has become politics entirely, but not part of it. States and governments impudently interfere in the affairs of national committees and dictate their will to them. They don't hesitate and don't hide. Insolently! Head-on!

"We were reproached for the fact that the Belarusian team participated in the We are together. Sport Games in Khanty-Mansiysk. They poked some photos from the competitions of skiers, hockey players and curling players, where the letter 'z' is supposedly visible. On this basis, our athletes were accused of supporting the military operation, although there were no Belarusian representatives in these sports even in the application, we did not participate!" Oleg Shepel says.

People say about this: it's like talking to a brick wall. There is another expression: about sufferable things.

"My father is Ukrainian, I myself was born in Kiev. Yelena Gvai has parents in Ukraine, the Secretary General of the Paralympic Committee Nikolai Shudeiko has a Ukrainian wife... And we are being dragged into politics. Sport is about peace! We must do everything to ensure that it acted as a unifying principle, but we are artificially divided..." Oleg Shepel gets excited.

Our champion Svetlana Motorina summed up the meeting and heated debate, "It's nice that the game is already afoot and there is a chance to return to world tournaments, to compete with all the strongest. I am far from politics, but it is obvious to me that we were suspended unfairly. It's sad that we have to prove our rights through the courts. I'm sure the truth will prevail."



Ihar Boki

ARENA

● Belarusian cyclists won nine medals at Tula Grand Prix

Representatives of Belarus, Russia, Uzbekistan, Iran and the United Arab Emirates participated in the Tula Grand Prix open All-Russian track cycling competitions. The tournament programme included Olympic disciplines: team and individual sprint, omnium, madison, keirin, as well as scratch and elimination race. During three competitive days, Belarusian cyclists received two gold, four silver and

three bronze medals. Artyom Zaitsev won the gold medal in the team sprint. Denis Mazur became the winner in the omnium.

● Alina Harnasko became the absolute champion of Belarus in rhythmic gymnastics

The capital's Palace of Rhythmic Gymnastics hosted an open championship of the country with the participation of the strongest Belarusian graces, as well as athletes from Russia.

Alina Harnasko won gold medals in all four types of the programme in individual exercises among seniors. However, she became the champion of Belarus in the all-around the day before.

The national team of Belarus gained gold and silver in certain types of group exercises among seniors, and the Republican Centre for Olympic Training team won gold and bronze. Representatives of the RCOP won gold medals in both events among juniors.

● Handball players from HC Gomel became champions of Belarus for the sixth time

The Gomel team defeated the athletes of BNTU-BelAZ Minsk Region in the second match for gold medals at home with a score of 40:32. HC Gomel won the first game with a score of 34:30. HC Gorodnichanka handball players won bronze medals after beating Brest club HC Victoria-Berestie in Grodno — 32:24. The Grodno team was also stronger in Brest — 36:32.



Photo of the week

The third season of the Vytoki. A Step Towards Olympus sports and cultural festival took place in Zhlobin

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



On May 26th, 1913, the world's first multi-engine airplane Russian Knight (S-21), which was created by a young engineer

Igor Sikorsky as an experimental aircraft for strategic reconnaissance, made its first flight. The aircraft marked the beginning of a new direction in aviation — heavy aircraft construction. Russian Knight became the ancestor of all subsequent passenger airliners, heavy bombers and transport aircraft in the world. In subsequent years, Sikorsky created crane helicopters, amphibious helicopters, minesweeper helicopters and turbine helicopters with retractable landing gear and 15 types of aircraft.

On May 27th, 1968, the Central State Archives of Scientific and Technical Documentation of Belarus was established in Minsk (since 1993 — the Belarusian State Archives of Scientific and Technical Documentation), a methodological centre for working with project-oriented, design, research, patent and other documentation created by design, design and technological, research organisations of the Republic of Belarus.



On May 27th, 1930, transparent adhesive tape is patented. This is a kind of adhesive tape based on cellophane, on one side of

which glue is applied. Scotch and Scotch Tape are registered trademarks of 3M Corporation. The world's first scotch tape was made from rubber, oils and cellophane-based resins. It was waterproof and withstood a wide range of temperatures. It was originally used for wrapping food. However, people themselves have come up with many other ways to use tape at work and at home.



May 28th is Border Guards Day in the Republic of Belarus. The holiday traces its history back to the times of the existence of the USSR. The current generation of guards of the Belarusian border stands

by the best military traditions, demonstrating high combat skills and civil maturity. Soldiers-border guards conscientiously carry out the most responsible tasks of ensuring the border security of the Republic of Belarus, protecting its economic interests, and combating transnational crime.

May 28th is Chemist Day in the Republic of Belarus — a holiday for all workers in the chemical and petrochemical industry, teachers and students of the Faculty of Chemistry in Belarus. Unofficially, Chemist's Day began to be celebrated in 1966. Since then, the celebration has been held



under the sign of the chemical elements of the periodic table. So, for example, the first Chemist Day became the Hydrogen Day — the first element of the Periodic table.

On May 29th, 1953, New Zealander Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay successfully climbed the highest peak of the Himalayas and the world — Everest (Chomolungma; 8848) for the first time in the world. Everest is a giant mountain range and the highest peak in the world, located on the border of Nepal and Tibet.



On May 30th, 1431, one of the main commanders of the French troops in the Hundred Years War, Joan of Arc, who later became the national heroine of France, was burned at the stake as a heretic in Rouen. In 1455-1456, the process of posthumous rehabilitation of Joan of Arc took place in Bourges. In 1920, she was canonised by the Catholic Church as a saint.



May 31st is World No Tobacco Day. It was proclaimed in 1987 at the initiative of the World Health Organisation in order to draw attention to the spread of tobacco smoking in the world. According to the WHO, more than 8 million



people die every year from the 'tobacco epidemic' in the world, more than 1.2 million of whom, non-smokers, die due to exposure to second-hand smoke.

May 31st, 1868, is considered the birthday of cycling, when the first 2000-metre cycling race was organised on the alleys of the park in the Parisian suburb of Saint-Cloud. More than 150 years have passed since then: athletes are divided into professionals and amateurs, new world records are being set, bicycles are equipped with all kinds of devices. But cycling still attracts with its dynamism and accessibility. Today, the most prestigious cycling race is the Tour de France, which has been held since 1903.

On May 31st, 1859, the clock on London's Big Ben was put into operation. The construction of the clock on the tower of St. Stephen of the Palace of Westminster was undertaken by the architect Charles Barry and the mechanic Benjamin Vulliamy. According to the plan, the new clock was supposed to be the largest and most accurate in the world, and so that its ringing could be heard across the capital. Throughout its history, Big Ben has become not only a symbol of its time, the period of the greatest dawn of the country, it has become one of the most recognisable symbols of Great Britain.

