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Kupala Night festival was celebrated all over Belarus. During the festivities in Shchuchin, Grodno Region

Bright tradition

Fortune-telling, bonfires, songs, the search for the mysterious ‘fern flower’... Kupala fairy tale attracts even those who do not believe in miracles. The festival *Alexandria Gathers Friends* was held for the 14th time. 80,000 guests came to the Shklov District, the homeland of the President of Belarus, in order to enjoy the bright event on the picturesque bank of the Dnieper on one of the shortest summer nights, to feel the folk culture, traditions, and participate in festivities. Over the years of its existence, the festival has become a real cultural brand, one of the main holidays of the summer, and also a hallmark of these places. Having started in 2010 as a local festival, over the years it has grown into a grandiose international festival. → 3



The multipolarity of the world cannot be stopped. Neither in a peaceful nor in a military way

The President of Belarus met with representatives of foreign and Belarusian media. Journalists from Belarus, Russia, the USA, Great Britain, France, Qatar Saudi Arabia, as well as the representative office of the Mir Interstate TV and Radio Company, were invited to a meeting with the Head of State. These are primarily the media that recently most actively sent applications for an interview with the President of Belarus. Aleksandr Lukashenko immediately proposed not to build a conversation in the form of a press conference, "Let's hold a conversation in the free manner (not a press conference) and talk about the issues that interest you and, I believe, all your spectators and the peoples of our countries, including Belarusian people." We offer readers to the most important statements of the Belarusian leader.



On the global world order

The first question is global, it was asked by the correspondent of the Al Arabiya television channel in Russia **Abdulzhavad Alshred**. He asked how the Belarusian leader sees the world in the future. The Head of State replied that he would not predict the future, since not a single politician knows for sure this, but this is what can be stated for sure, "The world was just stunned, went crazy. The subjects participating in this are slowly going crazy. You know very well who... Recently, at a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, I said that this world order has been destroyed today. It does not exist.

We no longer live according to the laws, international rules. Today we do not even live based on some unwritten codes. No rules, no codes of conduct. The world is destroyed, the world order too. Thanks to the games that the large countries of our planet started. Speaking very softly of what awaits: we are waiting, absolutely convinced of this, departure of the single-polar system into the non-existence. Multipolarity is appearing. And this process cannot be stopped. It cannot be stopped neither in a peaceful nor military manner."

In the future, Aleksandr Lukashenko sees the US forces, European Union, China, India as world centres. Africa and the Middle East will also show themselves.

"I would like the post-Soviet space, as far as possible, to consolidate and also act as one of the points of the support," the President added.

On the deployment of Wagner group

French journalists asked about the situation with the Wagner PMC. They shared that they saw satellite pictures from the Osipovichi District, where camps were supposedly built. The President of Belarus clearly outlined, "We do not build camps. We offered them several former military towns that were used in wartime. But the Wagner PMC has another vision on their deployment..."

Regarding the whereabouts of Yevgeny Prigozhin, the Head of State said that he was not in Belarus.

The President did not hide the fact that Wagner had something to teach us and confirmed that he really made an offer to Yevgeny Prigozhin to withdraw the PMC units to Belarus. However, the solution of the issue depends on the Russian authorities and the Wagner group itself, "We will definitely inform about our further relations with this unit..."

I am absolutely not worried and not bothered that we will have a certain number of these fighters. Moreover, they will be placed under certain conditions. And the main condition: if we need to use this unit for the defence of our state (if they are here), it will be involved instantly in any direction. And their experience will be in demand. We never attacked anyone and are not going to attack."

At the same time, the President indicated the fundamental moment, "When they make a decision to be placed here — a contract will be concluded with them, which will be legally binding and where everything will be spelled out. Then the framework in which this unit will act will be determined at the level of the law or decree of the President."



On the influence of an attempt to rebellion on Putin's position

When asked about whether the position of Vladimir Putin was shaken against the backdrop of a recent attempt by a military rebellion, Aleksandr Lukashenko answered unequivocally, "Don't even count on it.

There was no shaking...

No weakening! In such a situation, President Putin and any president, on the contrary, are activated, pull themselves together, but Putin is even more so. I know his character. This, on the contrary, contributed not only to his composure, but also, I would say, in a good sense of the word, aggressiveness to protect the country and respond."

Continuing the theme of the Wagner PMC, the President emphasised that it was important to stop this rebellion during the initial stages, otherwise it would have grown into a civil war, "I said directly to Prigozhin: 'If we do not agree, do not be offended. Our Belarusian army is in full combat readiness. Military units are identified that are ready to transfer to Moscow. We will protect Moscow with Putin'.

The first five or seven Russian aircraft landed in our country to transfer the Belarusian special forces near Moscow. This is approximately like Wagnerians, and maybe better in some aspects. And you understand that this conflict could grow. If it was necessary to involve the forces of special operations, we were ready to do this."

On the situation in Ukraine

The President was asked if he was counting on the victory of Russia in Ukraine.

"I am," followed a firm answer. "This is our close ally — legally, actually and historically. Therefore, of course, we expect this. But if you do not

want Russia to win, sit down at the negotiating table and agree."

Aleksandr Lukashenko also commented on the version that Russia could supposedly end the war by dealing a nuclear blow to the territory of Ukraine, "This is not even considered. Russia has enough of ordinary weapons, non-nuclear ones, in order to achieve its goals.

The war in Ukraine, a special military operation are not and will not be the reason for the application of a nuclear blow from any side. Now, if there is NATO aggression, for example, of the United States of America or the NATO Bloc against Belarus or Russia, which will mean that they are invading our territory, then we will wash our hands of all responsibility.



According to the concept of national security, Russia and Belarus, which today has this weapon, will respond. Therefore, I always say: you do not touch us, and we will never use this deadly weapon. And we will not even fight."

The question was asked about the prospects for the resumption of the negotiation process in Ukraine. The Head of State noted,

"A lot points to the possibility that the situation should change by the fall and we will begin to talk at the negotiating table. Maybe. Maybe not in September — a little later. I do not want to issue some information, but Europeans are already talking about this.

The closest is France. Not far from them is Germany. Europe losses the most from this war. And the beneficiary is actually one country."

On the placement of nuclear weapons in Belarus

Another hot topic for Western journalists is the placement of tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus and control of it. The correspondent of the New York Times, Valerie Hopkins, was interested in who would still control this weapon in our territory — Belarus or Russia.

Aleksandr Lukashenko primarily outlined that it was 'not particularly decent for any politician' to talk on the topic of nuclear weapons, but he still announced some details. First of all, he once again confirmed the fact that a certain number of nuclear warheads was moved to the territory of Belarus and is under reliable protection. At the same time, no one could track the movement of nuclear warheads.

"I will give you a fascinating fact: we did not move nuclear warheads on the ground. We

didn't bother anyone. We moved them in such a way that neither you, nor the States (USA. — editor's note), neither the Mi-6, nor Germany could notice this anywhere. This was our plan," said the Head of State.

As for the use of nuclear weapons, the President said,

"Do not worry about the use. We are not going to attack neither the United States, nor Germany, nor the UK. We are generally not going to attack anyone with the help of nuclear weapons. These are weapons exclusively for defensive purposes. If you do not touch us, you may forget about nuclear weapons. But if you make aggression against Belarus, the response will be instantaneous. The goals are defined."

Answering the questions of Western journalists about the placement of tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, the Head of State also clarified that the facilities for the nuclear weapons were completely ready a month ago. Most of the nuclear weapons have already been moved to Belarus. By the end of the year, the remaining warheads will definitely be moved.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by



Cultural code of Belarusians

The President of Belarus visited the *Kupala Night* Republican Festival in Alexandria

This colourful festival, which this year brought together an unprecedented number of guests (about 80 thousand) and has grown to an international scale, impressed both with a concert programme and a fun exhibition-fair. By the way, the motto and leitmotif of the holiday was 'Protective Amulet for Peace and Unity'. Since the stork was chosen as the symbol of the Year of Peace and Creation among all the amulets, each Belarusian region has prepared its own 'stork'.

The representation of the Russian Federation was larger than ever: creative teams, artisans, diplomatic delegations arrived from 20 regions. But this is not surprising, because the festival was held under the auspices of the Union State.



Aleksandr Lukashenko came to the celebration at the beginning of the folk show *It Will Be Very Interesting*, an evening concert at the main venue in Alexandria, and with his appearance he caused a flurry of enthusiastic emotions among the audience of the festival. The speech, with which the Head of State addressed the guests of the *Kupala Night* festival, was presented both in Belarusian and Russian. In his speech, the President spoke warmly and sincerely about important human values and shared a recipe for peace.

Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised the importance of preserving the original Belarusian traditions,

“Without national dignity, there is not and cannot be freedom, sovereignty, respect and security... Looking at the scale of this celebration, I always think: our festival is the embodiment of everything that we proudly consider our ancient heritage. This is the greatest value of human relations based on friendship, mutual respect and hospitality. It's all here. This is the value of the family, which is preserved thanks to strong family traditions, care for parents, love for children.”

The President spoke about the special role of the small homeland in the life and destiny of every person, “You know that my heart belongs to this corner of Belarus. Here is my place of power. This land, the people who live in it, taught me to love my country and my people. And I will not tire of thanking my small homeland for the happy years of my childhood and my youth spent here. For the energy that this land feeds me today. And I'm ready to share it with all of you... And, of course, thanks to everyone who makes this festival — organisers, directors, artists, craftsmen. Everyone who creates this special atmosphere of friendship and warmth of communication, our dear guests.”

The Head of State added, “If we behave like this



everywhere, on every metre of our Belarus, greet our relatives, friends and even those who made a mistake (but comes to us with good intentions) in a hospitable and prudent way, in our country there will be peace.

As soon as we begin to crumble and break, as soon as we start resting on our laurels and we think that there are second-rate peoples, a war will begin. So take care of what we have. Appreciate what we have. And we will always live in peace and harmony. Not only with our neighbours (they are from God, they are not chosen), but also with all the peoples of our planet.”

The President sincerely wished everyone peace, goodness and happiness.

The guests at the *Kupala Night* festival included the leaders of five Russian regions at once — Bryansk, Kursk, Smolensk, Penza and even Irkutsk. To get to Alexandria, for example, Governor Igor Kobzev covered a distance of six thousand kilometres.

...The night sky of Alexandria was lit up by magical fireworks. The Head of State was walking towards the exit, but the guests of the holiday did not want to let him go. They said ‘thank you’, wanted to hug, asked for a photo as a keepsake. It was a celebration of bright and positive emotions!

Window of opportunity

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, visited Mogilev Elevator Engineering Plant

Immediately upon arrival, the Head of State pointed out the need to restore order in Mogilev. The Belarusian leader drew attention to the problematic moments in this regard from the helicopter on the way to the enterprise.

“You are ruining yourself with this clutter,” noted the President. “Put things in order. So that everything will be brought into line within a year. Mobilise people.”

The point is that sometimes production areas or in the area of construction sites are kept in an unattractive form. The task for the leadership of the region and the city is to solve these problems. Chairman of the Mogilev Region Executive Committee Anatoly Isachenko reported to the Head of State on the main indicators of the region's socio-economic development. The growth rate of the gross regional product in the Mogilev Region in January-May amounted to 98.6% compared to the same period last year.

“You have three failures for the region. The most surprising thing is that your industry is also failing,” noted Aleksandr Lukashenko.

As Anatoly Isachenko clarified, they cannot reach the planned GRP indicators due to poor results in industry, retail and wholesale trade. As for industry, there are issues in two areas —

woodworking and cement production. By the end of the year they are expected to be resolved, there are already some changes.

The President asked about the pace of housing construction, how problematic issues are being resolved at the largest enterprises of the region and how investment projects are being implemented in the region.

“The point is not to keep people busy. We have almost no problems with this. The point is that each district should earn money for itself,” emphasised Aleksandr Lukashenko.

“Each region has its own project. Projects of various directions. They are literally all at work,” replied the governor. As an example, he cited the cultivation of rainbow trout in the southeast of the Mogilev Region. Every month the company grows 20 tons of fish, the products are very popular in retail chains.

The Head of State visited the production facilities at Mogilevliftmash. Here they talked about further prospects, including an increase in the volume and range of products, the involvement of additional territories.

Then Aleksandr Lukashenko toured the exposition of modern elevator equipment produced at the enterprise, including open and closed elevator car parks. The holding also produces elec-

tric motors of various modifications, woodworking, agricultural and household appliances.

One of the emphases the Head of State made on the issue of energy conservation. For example, the enterprise also has a device for disinfecting elevators and premises, which is especially important in view of the recent pandemic.

Mogilevliftmash is actively working on import substitution. Several investment projects are being implemented at the enterprise, which was also reported to the President.

First of all, this is the modernisation of the production of high-speed elevators and elevators with gearless drive. Such a mechanism has a high efficiency, increased reliability and durability, and the elevators move almost without noise and vibration. The enterprise creates the production of electric motors, traction motors for electric transport and explosion-proof electric motors for mining enterprises.

During his visit to Mogilevliftmash, Aleksandr Lukashenko also spoke with the workers of this enterprise.

“Demand for your products is high. And not only for yours,” said the Head of State. “Today there is a good chance. The window of opportunity is open. It won't always be like this... No



one demands anything superfluous. If you manage a holding, you are responsible for it. For the plant, for the people. And each in his place. Welder, installer and other guys, accountants, economists — you must be in the right place, give your result. However, there must be discipline.

Because lack of discipline is a failure. Failure is war. Everything starts with economics.”

In this regard, the Head of State cited the example of Ukraine, where the economy was brought down even before the special military operation. Thus, in addition to external, there are always internal reasons. And here Aleksandr Lukashenko once again emphasised the responsibility of each individual for the stability and well-being of the country, “No power will do anything for a person. What you must do, you must do. You can't get away from this.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko confirmed the plan to provide rural areas in Belarus with broadband Internet access by 2025, “We have a plan to close this topic in 2025. We must solve this problem. We are not far behind the world.”

At the same time, the Head of State drew attention to the fact that people need to be told how to use the Internet safely. After all, the Internet in capable hands can actually be a weapon that is used, among other things, for a destructive influence on society, as in Belarus in 2020.

“Look at the present. If we had not survived then, we would not exist as a country. We would have been dealt with long ago without a war. And there would be NATO troops near Smolensk,” added the President.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

Clear perspectives for tomorrow

The Belarusian economy is at the stage of recovery growth

At a recent meeting with the senior members of the Council of Ministers, the President stressed that he expects the Government to fulfil the tasks set for this year to develop the country's economy. The Head of State noted that the economy is doing well, but there are problematic issues that need to be addressed as soon as possible, since they can seriously affect the situation in the future. As the Prime Minister Roman Golovchenko reported, in five months the economy reached the targeted growth trajectory. Due to what this happened and what are the future prospects — we discussed this issue with the expert.

By Vladislav Sychevich

Statistics are encouraging

The fact that the Belarusian economy has entered a growth trajectory is best evidenced by statistics. The key indicator that indicates positive trends is the gross domestic product. In the five months of 2023, compared to the same period last year, it rose by 0.9 percent. Practically all sectors made a positive contribution. This includes agriculture, which grew by 5.4 percent, industrial production, which increased by 4.1 percent, and investments — plus 2.5 percent. There was an increase in retail trade turnover. The wholesale trade turnover also expanded by 3.4 percent, which confirms the sale of products that were produced by the industry. There is good performance in the export of goods and services. All this points to the recovery of the economy, **Doctor of Economic Sciences Valery Baynev** is sure.

— In recent years, a fake economy has formed in the world. Basically, some bubbles are inflated, then they burst. The economy has become virtual. However, in Belarus, over the past decades, when the President came to power, a real economy has been developing — food production, clothing, furniture, equipment, and so on. The entire virtual economy is now approaching its collapse. Our country is implementing a model of a socially oriented market economy, which has proven its viability. Economic security is ensured on its basis. The implementation of strategic national interests, such as sustainable economic development and high competitiveness of the Belarusian economy, achieving a high level and quality of life for citizens, is directly related to the economic aspect. Belarus initially headed for creative development. It's starting to pay off. The numbers speak for it. Every month, the growth rates of retail and wholesale trade are accelerating. The real disposable money income of the population is also growing. They have increased by 1.6 percent in four months and continue to gain. The industry is developing dynamically. Enterprises of the Industry Ministry maintain the pace of growth in production and exports.

The population practically did not feel the sanctions pressure. All social tasks of the state are carried out in full. Valery Baynev draws attention to the fact that inflation processes continue to slow down: in May, a historical minimum of annual inflation was recorded — 3.7 percent.

— We see that it continues to slow down further. Export growth continues to be high. A positive balance of foreign trade was ensured. In addition, there is a positive trend with investments. Despite exter-



Yury Mozolevsky



BELTA

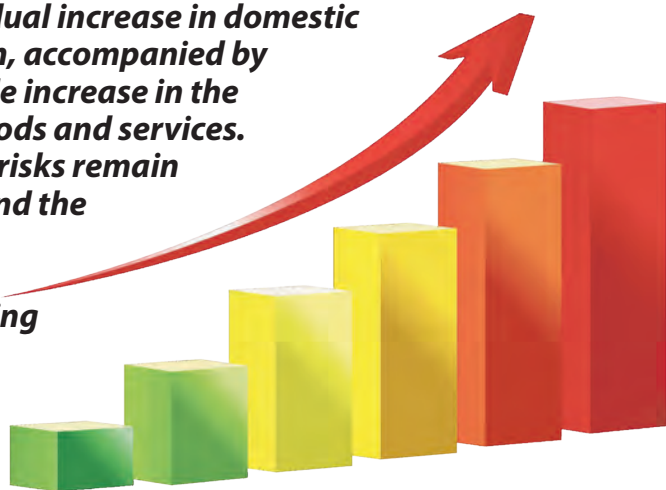


Vitaly Pivovarchik



Aleksandr Kuchmel

GDP growth is supported by a gradual increase in domestic consumption, accompanied by a comparable increase in the supply of goods and services. Inflationary risks remain moderate, and the regulator has lowered the refinancing rate for the sixth time this year



nal pressure, the country's investment image is preserved, reflecting its reliability, and active work is being done to reinvest funds in the economy by foreign companies. The Head of State emphasised that a strong economy is a guarantee of stability in the Belarusian society. Moreover, the well-being and prosperity of citizens depends on how it works. After all, in fact, the growth of salaries, pensions, as well as other payments is impossible without an effective economy. There are all prerequisites for further successful development and a reasonable positive assessment of the results for the first half of the year.

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— Let me remind you that today it is 9.5 percent per annum. There is a vision for the future. For the real sector, this is an opportunity to take cheaper loans, which will allow additional investment in the economy.

Union State affairs

The economist is sure that industrial development is the main priority now. It is clear that Belarus will not pull all this direction separately, it is necessary to co-operate. It is good that we have a Union State with Russia and the understanding of the leaders of the two countries about the need for deeper integration, including at the industrial level. After all, only together can we resist the West, which has declared a real economic war on our countries.

— Under the conditions of illegitimate pressure, it is necessary to increase the output of import-substituting products and work more actively with friendly

countries, primarily with Russia, which we are successfully doing. The departure of Western competitors from the market of the Union State has expanded the opportunities for closer co-operation between Belarus and Russia. Our countries are forming a single economic space. Particular attention is paid to the development of industrial co-operation, which allows increasing mutual trade turnover, helps to strengthen the economy of the Union State and improve the well-being of citizens of our countries. Within the framework of the Union State, Belarus and Russia are implementing joint investment projects, one of the goals of which is import substitution and the achievement of technological and energy sovereignty. Our innovation and technology sector should not depend on imported materials and components. Therefore, it became possible to use Russian funds to make a joint innovation breakthrough.

The expert recalled that Russia is the largest investor in the Belarusian economy. And Belarus is Russia's main trading partner among the CIS countries.

— Belarus and Russia are currently implementing joint investment projects. An intergovernmental agreement on providing the government of Belarus with a state financial loan to Russia for a total amount of up to 105 billion Russian rubles was signed in November 2022. Lists of projects by types of products have been formed. Of course, today the most important tasks are import substitution and increasing the share of innovative production. This is a matter of national security. Also, more attention should be paid to the implementation of the economic programs of the Union State. It's time to release your product.

Valery Baynev draws attention to the fact that the transition to mutual settlements in national currencies allowed Belarus and Russia not to depend on the exchange rate fluctuations of the dollar and the euro and speculation in the foreign exchange markets.

— Foreign currencies should be treated as injections into the circulatory system of the economy. If in this system there are alien bodies in the form of the dollar and the euro, then this always inevitably leads to distortions in economic and production processes. Therefore, the main task that Belarus and Russia, as well as the SCO and BRICS countries are now solving, is the use of national currencies for mutual settlements. This avoids any blocking of transactions. Thus, Western banks can block money at any time. Moreover, they see all payments and transactions, and all commercial information becomes extremely open to the American intelligence services. And this is unacceptable.

Efficient industrial alliance



BKM Holding announced the achievement of 80 percent of the localisation of the Eurasian electric bus

The creation of the Eurasian electric bus is an objective indicator of the high level of industrial integration within the EAEU. It is both eloquent and wordless at the same time demonstrating what nations can achieve when they work together. The project was demonstrated in Sochi at the *Eurasia is Our Home* exhibition. Oleg Bytsko, Deputy General Director for Innovative Development of BKM Holding, shared more detail about the progress of its implementation, as well as how to work effectively under sanctions.

By Ilya Kryzhevich

Five percent question

When creating an electric bus, the company tried to maximise the use of production on the territory of the EAEU. Oleg Bytsko clarified that at the moment the main components for the electric bus are produced in our country and Russia, “We have localised the electric bus by 80 percent. Also, 15 percent of components are supplied to us from friendly countries.”

At the same time, he drew attention to the fact that the remaining 5 percent of components come from countries from which they are now imported under the parallel import scheme. Among them are axles, IGBT modules, which are used to manufacture the inverter. However, adhesives, contactors — all this has to be bought through third-party companies.

“We have already replaced everything we could. It was precisely the equipment that was more complex that remained. It is not produced in our country. Furthermore, we are currently actively working on this issue,” Deputy General Director noted.

Refocused and contracted

Despite the sanctions, the company was able to find a way out and continues to fulfil orders today. The main partner with which BKM Holding is working today is Russia.

The pace of co-operation is only growing. This is facilitated, firstly, by the high level of skill sets and the competitive cost of production, which allows us to win tenders. Secondly, in many Russian cities there is a need to upgrade urban transport — trolleybuses, electric buses and trams.

“We have completely reoriented ourselves to Russia. For the current year, we are contracted in this direction. We fulfil orders for electric buses. A number of Russian cities are ordering electric buses with express

charging, such as those operated in Minsk and Moscow. Some regions are placing orders for electric buses with night charging. This year we will deliver 16 units to Krasnodar and nine more to Sochi. In addition, 11 electric buses will be sent to Krasnoyarsk, and in the near future they plan to hold a competition for another nine cars, in which we will participate,” the interlocutor explained.

The main product that the holding produces in the largest quantity is self-driving trolleybuses, which can travel about 20 kilometres on one charge without contact with the network. Trolleybuses of this type are supplied to St. Petersburg, Krasnodar and Yekaterinburg. The production of classic trolleybuses continues: in 2023, the new model 321 of the Olgerd series will arrive in Murmansk and Krasnodar for the first time. To date, tram contracts have been signed with Nizhny Novgorod, Barnaul, Samara, and soon with Krasnodar.

Last year, 49 trolleybuses of the new generation model 32100D were sent to St. Petersburg. The autonomous course of this machine has been greatly increased. In 2023, another 37 trolleybuses have already been delivered in this direction, the remaining

vehicles will arrive in the city in the near future. Moreover, similar vehicles are delivered to Yekaterinburg, with which a contract for 49 trolleybuses was signed, and to Krasnodar. In turn, the largest project for 170 tram cars is being implemented in Nizhny Novgorod.

Oleg Bytsko emphasised that by the end of this year, the holding’s production is fully loaded with orders. In addition, a number of contracts have already been signed and at the beginning of the next.

“It is also worth noting that the orders that we receive at the moment exceed our capacity in terms of the number of units that we can pro-

duce. But at the same time, we continue to fulfil orders. We are already working on the issues of concluding contracts for the next year,” the Deputy General Director of the company said.

New items next to come

The company continues to develop new models of equipment. For this, there is also its own scientific and technical centre, as well as a software bureau.

BKM Holding was the first in the CIS to launch mass production of electric buses. In 2022, the first Vitovt Truck Electro Prime electric truck was also demonstrated. The components in it are largely created at the expense of the enterprise’s own resources. Among these are DC converters, inverters, electrical circuit protection and circuit control units. Particular attention is paid to the creation of their own software.

For the production of an electric truck, the company applied the most modern approaches to ensure the convenience of cargo transportation. Savings on refuelling are also important — a kilometre on an electric truck costs 1.6 times cheaper than that of a diesel counterpart. In addition, the machine can carry a load of up to 7.8 tonnes over a distance of about 200 kilometres at a speed of 90 km/h on a single charge.

Now the electric truck is being tested in our country. Shortly after a successful run-in, it will be possible to move to serial production.



New centres of power

Why are BRICS, SCO and ASEAN attractive for Belarus

Despite the degradation of certain aspects of international co-operation, the desire to unite in order to jointly achieve the goals set remains one of the most effective ways for countries around the world to increase their level of well-being. But openness and freshness of approaches are more important than ever for constructive and fruitful co-operation in various fields. This is one of the reasons why more and more countries are turning their attention to relatively new international integration associations that are actively gaining momentum. During the period of restructuring the system of international relations, these economic blocs play a strategically important role in building a multipolar world order. Let's take a closer look at them.

By Svetlana Isaenok

SCO

Alliance from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Arctic to the Indian Ocean

Intensive dialogue between the member countries of the organisation began 20 years ago. In 1996, Shanghai hosted the first meeting of the heads of five states — Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. On the basis of the signed agreement on building confidence in the military field, a political association known as the Shanghai Five arose in the border area. In 2001, after Uzbekistan joined the 'five', the heads of six states signed the

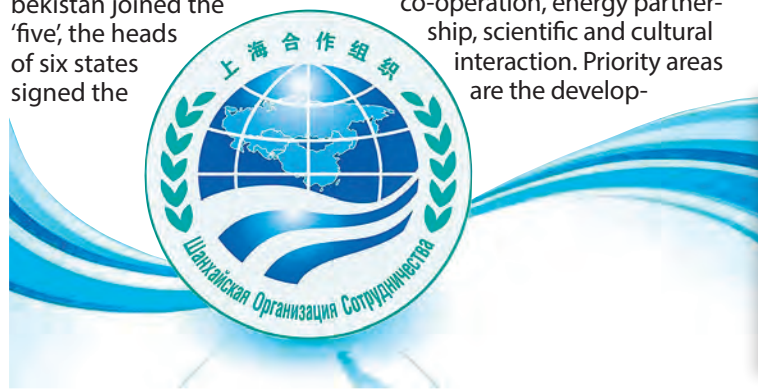
Declaration establishing the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation.

Today, the geography of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation, including observer countries, occupies 61 percent of the Eurasian continent.

Goals

According to the SCO Charter, the goals of the alliance are stability and security in the region, as well as the fight against terrorism and extremism, the development of economic co-operation, energy partnership, scientific and cultural interaction. Priority areas are the develop-

ment of transport infrastructure, energy, telecommunications, the oil and gas sector, agriculture, the use of water resources, etc. An important step for the SCO was the meeting of the Council of Heads of State in 2005: it decided to grant observer status to three major Asian powers — India, Iran and Pakistan. Earlier, in 2004, this status was granted to Mongolia. There was a geographical expansion of the organisation, which made it possible to fundamentally increase the international weight of the SCO. In 2009, a decision was made to grant dialogue partner status to Belarus and Sri Lanka.



FIGURE

World GDP at purchasing power parity was \$108.7 trillion in 2014. The GDP of the SCO countries at PPP for the same period was \$22 trillion, i.e. 20.24 percent of the world's level.

DIRECT SPEECH

Elena Dostanko, Dean of the Faculty of International Relations of the Belarusian State University,

"The participation of Belarus in the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation has a long history. In July 2015, the Republic of Belarus became the first European country to receive observer status in the SCO. In September 2022, it was on the sidelines of the summit of the Heads of State of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation in Samarkand that President of the Republic of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko and Chinese President Xi Jinping adopted a Declaration on raising the level of bilateral relations to an all-weather and comprehensive strategic partnership. Last year, the procedure for admitting the republic to the SCO was also launched, a memorandum of commitments for Belarus to join the organisation has already been signed."

ASEAN

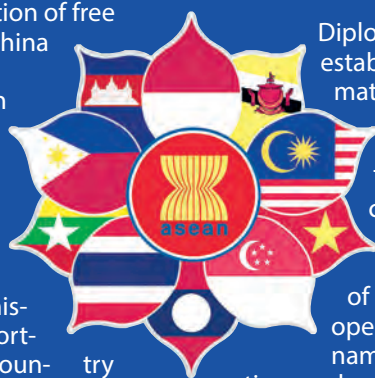
The core of integration processes in the Asia-Pacific region

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations includes 10 states — Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, Cambodia, Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar. The organisation is headquartered in Jakarta. The main goal is to contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of the member countries. Another important task of ASEAN is the creation of free economic trade zones with Japan, China and South Korea. This political and economic association was created in 1967. ASEAN aims to become the world's fourth largest economy by 2030. Strengthening partnerships with the leading economies of the region should be the main tool for achieving this.

According to the Foreign Affairs Ministry, the ASEAN countries are an important priority for Belarus in Asia. Our country is implementing a policy aimed at developing friendly relations with the states of the region.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

If we analyse the data, we can see that ASEAN's economic growth since 2000 is much more stable than that of the EU. The same can be said about the level of bank deposits of the population — there have been no sharp fluctuations in this area since 2005.



Diplomatic relations have been established with all countries, diplomatic missions have been opened in Vietnam (concurrently in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand) and Indonesia (concurrently in Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines). In March 2022, the Consulate General of the Republic of Belarus was opened in Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam). In addition, inter-parliamentary ties are developing.

Since 2011, Belarus has had observer status at the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly. The Ambassador of Belarus to Indonesia has been accredited to ASEAN since 2012. Common approaches to issues on the multilateral agenda allow Belarus to successfully co-operate with the countries of Southeast Asia in the international arena.

FACT

227 companies with annual revenues exceeding \$1 billion have their headquarters in ASEAN countries

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,

"Our response to the sanctions is stepping up co-operation with the SCO, BRICS and ASEAN, new trade agreements as well as constructive and mutually beneficial contacts with everyone who is ready to be our friends and partners."

During a session of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council, on May 25th, 2023

BRICS

G7 for the Global South

BRICS is an informal interstate organisation that includes Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. The acronym BRICS is derived from the names of countries in English. The organisation is aimed at developing comprehensive co-operation between member countries on issues of economy, finance, education, science, culture and other areas.

Today, about 20 countries wish to join the association. Among them are Venezuela, Gabon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, Iran, the Union of the Comoros, Cuba, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.



How BRICS appeared

The organisation (commonwealth of states) was founded in June 2006 as part of the St. Petersburg Economic Forum with the participation of the economy ministers of Brazil, Russia, India, and China. BRIC was officially approved in 2006 on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. And in 2011, South Africa joined it, the name changed to BRICS. Today, the association includes countries with some of the largest and fastest growing economies in the world.

FACT

The BRICS countries together occupy 30 percent of the earth's surface, their population is 42 percent of the world

FIGURE

Since 2020, the BRICS countries have surpassed the G7 countries in terms of contribution to the growth of the global economy. From 2023 to 2028, the share of BRICS will grow to 33.6 percent, while for the G7 it will decrease to 27.8 percent

The purpose of BRICS

To create conditions for mutually beneficial co-operation that would help countries to grow and develop further, and in the future to transform economic growth into political influence and maintain a multipolar world.

BRICS intends to actively expand

In May 2022, the Chinese side proposed expanding the BRICS group, which currently includes Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. On June 27th, 2022, Argentina and Iran applied to join the organisation. On July 14th, the President of the International BRICS Forum, Purnima Anand, announced the desire of Turkey, Egypt and Saudi Arabia to become members of the BRICS. In addition, Algeria applied on November 7th. According to South African Ambassador to Russia Mzuvukile Maketuk, 13 countries are interested in BRICS membership and six of them have already submitted official applications. Among the contenders for membership in the group, the diplomat named Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. This year, Bangladesh and Ethiopia also applied to join the organisation.

HOWEVER

Belarus is also working on the issue of joining the BRICS format. This was stated by Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Aleinik at the collegium of the Foreign Ministry in February 2023.

Eastern wisdom 'If you want to defeat your enemy, educate his children' has long been firmly adopted by the West. Any country that falls into the sphere of its aggressive interests is subjected to massive processing by funds and programmes that carry the 'light of enlightenment'. The attack begins with numerous NGOs, initiatives and foundations, and only then come the 'colour revolutions' or the rockets.



Foreign 'educators' revived again

Hunting for children

By Alena Krasovskaya

They weave their webs

Someone tries to distort the history of the country as much as possible, someone talks about its complete backwardness compared to other countries, someone persistently advertises other people's values, someone teaches us to hate our own and love the Western. Education and funding comes in a wide wave, and they have one goal — to raise a generation of traitors who will not defend their homeland, because they will no longer have the concept of homeland...

For almost three years in Belarus there has been talk that the upbringing of children should not be done by random people, especially those who are on a foreign salary. From time to time, we even hear that so many NGOs, private schools, kindergartens and other hotbeds of an ideology alien to us have been liquidated in a district, region, country. We fight, we discover, we stand guard.

Meanwhile, the majority of 'educators' have not disappeared anywhere, despite the numbers of closed and liquidated.

However, foreign sponsors have not gone away, for whom Belarus has remained a country in which it did not work out the first time. But the West does not like defeats and does not forgive. This means that they work for us with redoubled efforts and funding.

Moreover, they still continue to raise our children. But for now, they are doing it carefully, carefully re-building networks of courses, camps, training seminars, and events. It is still timid again, but just give it time — and all this will again sprout in a lush colour. The struggle for minds and ideological influence continues...

Attractive offers from the Internet

"There is an enrolment in the 'Children and Teen Business' programme — a 10-day camp for Belarusian teenagers on the topics of business, marketing, finance and presentations. Teamwork with peers with the support of mentors. The presentation of your business projects will be held at the end! The best projects will be submitted to the competition and will have the opportunity to receive funding for implementation. Classes will be held in Warsaw and Vilnius, but the organisers promise to add other cities if the demand is high (for this, indicate the preferred city in the participation form). Unfortunately, due to the

political situation in Belarus, camps are only possible in Lithuania, Latvia and Poland. Young people aged 10-16 are invited to participate."

"Hackathon of inspiring projects — offline in Warsaw! XXX invites Belarusians aged 12-21 who have ideas for activist, social, urban or media projects. At the Hackathon, you will learn how to turn ideas into high-profile activities and grow them into projects. You will also learn how to work with artificial intelligence and how to speak in public. Winning projects will receive mentoring and financial support" (style and spelling of the original are kept).

Such announcements have recently been pouring in packs on the heads of Internet users from Belarus. Only the names of events and inviting parties change, but the essence is the same for everyone: Belarusian youth is again in the focus of interests there, abroad. In the lists of mentors, coaches, teachers, the familiar names of those who fled Belarus after 2020 appear. However, the age of participants sometimes starts from 8 years.

Of course, not a single reasonable parent will send his 8-10-14-year-old child 'to study the biodiversity of the Vilnius Region' with strange people, and even to another country. Therefore, to get to know the parents, the organisers go online and meet in Belarus. How to contact them? Information will be provided upon request. Because they are still afraid. But not so much, since they arrange such meetings. Some initiatives invite abroad not only children, but also their parents. And, of course, all this is completely free, with the opening of free visas and other goodies...

There are other options. On the Internet, where our children and teenagers are constantly located, they are offered to participate in something and win some kind of stuff.

For example, one overseas initiative invites teenagers to make their city a better place. You need to take a picture of some problem in your locality — a hole in the asphalt, a collapsed shop, whatever — and describe the situation. 'Kind and unselfish' uncles and aunts will simultaneously tell the participant how to become a 'city activist' and start solving problems. Because they are very worried about life in our country.

In the meantime, especially epic photographs sent by the participants illustrate

materials about how bad everything is in Belarus. The most active and promising will receive a prize — a free trip to the summer camp of urban activism, all in the same Poland and Lithuania.

Urban activism, as well as teenage business, and digital literacy, and many other things that our youth want to learn abroad, in principle, are not bad topics. Especially if the training is based on a real desire to give young people something new and important. But the problem is that in Poland and Lithuania, a good undertaking is given the necessary ideological basis, which in a couple of years can turn into certain political views that Warsaw and Vilnius need and are completely alien to Minsk.

Camps that teach...

And what about in Belarus? Is there really no alternative and our children and youth can only learn something new or go on vacation abroad? Of course not. Wellness, suburban, city, tent, educational, creative, sports, school — it's all about summer camps in Belarus. And there are literally hundreds of them. For every taste and budget. And also all sorts of courses, hobby groups, clubs, sports and military-patriotic schools that work all year round. Some are completely free.

Children and teenagers in our country are usually occupied with something useful and interesting. Children come to us even from other countries, especially in summer,



and we don't brainwash anyone with propaganda, we just welcome everyone with pleasure and make their vacation as memorable and cool as possible.

But among all this useful variety, those who have not been in Belarus for a long time still feel great.

Literally in the middle of June there was a scandal in the Lida District. A children's tent camp appeared on the banks of the Neman River, in which there were 55 children from 8 years old. The camp operated informally. The Christian Fellowship of Adults and Young People public association was the organiser of the camp.

The activities of the camp were suspended due to violation of sanitary standards and lack of approvals, the children were offered a rest in another camp.

The YMCA scouting organisation has been hiding behind the name Christian Fellowship of Adults and Young People for many years. An organisation with a very rich history and geography. For example, it is precisely such scout organisations in Ukraine that successfully educated the younger generation in the spirit of neo-Nazism. For what has been grown in Ukraine, we all have the misfortune to observe for more than one year and in the immediate vicinity of our borders.

YMCA is funded by foreign grants. Even if the organisers of the 'fellowship' carefully conceal this, it does not take much effort to establish the sources of the unification's longevity in Belarus.

Or another religious mission, which also has no approvals for children's summer camps in the Lida District — the Charitable Catholic Society 'Caritas' of the Conference of Catholic Bishops in Belarus. But since there are no agreements, 'Caritas' cunningly decided to open summer recreation centres. They love children in this organisation and work with them.

By the way, in the same Ukraine, it was 'Caritas' that issued manuals for children, in which they told preschoolers and younger schoolchildren about why it is imperative to kill Russians. And they also talked about the superiority of Ukrainians over other Slavic peoples.

Does anyone doubt that in Belarus, without ideology, these also do not work? Moreover, in August 2020, the 'Caritas' website spoke so confidently about the crisis of power in Belarus and supported the 'victims of lawlessness'...



Belarus joins top-10 countries for relocation

Belarus is ranked among the top ten most affordable countries in terms of finance, sharing the 8th place in the rating with Argentina, according to the British Global Living Index rating

In total, twenty-eight countries from Europe, Asia, Australia and two Americas got into the rating, which was compiled to assess the financial prospects of the country for relocation.

to buy housing in Belarus for about 14 average annual incomes.

The first place in the ranking was taken by the United States boasting a high level of income in the country in relation

	Country	Continent	Electricity prices	Gas prices	Property prices	National income	
1	United States	North America	\$0.38	\$0.06	4.5	\$70,930	8.71
2	Canada	North America	\$0.317	\$0.044	9.4	\$48,310	7.32
3	Australia	Oceania	\$0.232	\$0.085	7.5	\$57,170	7.23
4	Malaysia	Asia	\$0.05	\$0.026	8.1	\$10,710	6.85
5	New Zealand	Oceania	\$0.19	\$0.06	9	\$45,230	6.76
6	Ireland	Europe	\$0.428	\$0.161	7.3	\$78,110	6.39
7	United Kingdom	Europe	\$0.41	\$0.087	8.3	\$44,480	6.47
8	Argentina	South America	\$0.036	\$0.005	22.7	\$9,960	5.28
8	Belarus	Europe	\$0.091	\$0.008	13.8	\$6,940	5.28
10	Hong Kong	Asia	\$0.172	\$0.143	44.9	\$54,460	5.08
10	Belgium	Europe	\$0.527	\$0.115	6.5	\$50,490	5.09
10	Japan	Asia	\$0.261	\$0.236	10.3	\$42,650	5.09
13	Slovakia	Europe	\$0.208	\$0.054	13.2	\$20,840	5
14	Denmark	Europe	\$0.582	\$0.388	6.6	\$68,300	4.91
15	Hungary	Europe	\$0.114	\$0.086	14.6	\$17,740	4.82
16	Netherlands	Europe	\$0.494	\$0.033	7.2	\$55,200	4.72
16	Serbia	Europe	\$0.106	\$0.483	15.9	\$8,460	4.72
18	Sweden	Europe	\$0.365	\$0.419	9.9	\$59,540	4.63
18	France	Europe	\$0.219	\$0.182	11.8	\$44,160	4.63

There are so many factors that can be taken into consideration when it comes to determining the affordability of living in a country. Looking at electricity, gas, property prices, and gross national income, authors of the British study have determined which countries are the most affordable to live in. The rating shows the prospects of the country for a possible relocation and life in order to compensate for the growing inflation around the world.

Such parameters as very low prices for electricity and gas (in these affordability parameters our country is placed 3rd and 2nd, respectively) enabled Belarus to take a relatively high position in the rating. Moreover, the property price-to-income ratio, according to experts, enables

to the cost of housing and utility bills.

Canada ranks second due to maintaining a relatively high level of wages with cheaper energy compared to the US. Completing this top three list of the overall most affordable countries to live in is Australia. Whilst some expenses in this country have skyrocketed in price, it appears that Australia is one of the most affordable places to live when it comes to the price of household bills, price of natural gas, and a property price-to-income ratio.

Belarus' closest western neighbour — Poland — is ranked 21st due to rather high energy prices, which reduces the financial attractiveness of this country for relocation.

US riskiest day for mass shootings

At least 17 mass shootings were recorded across the US over the Fourth of July holiday weekend, including a string of deadly incidents in which as many as 18 people died, data published by the Gun Violence Archive showed

Attacks in Philadelphia, Texas and Washington underscore America's inability to protect its citizenry from gun violence. Mass shootings broke out at festivals, block parties and other gatherings in a handful of cities resulting in 18 people killed and nearly 100 injured.

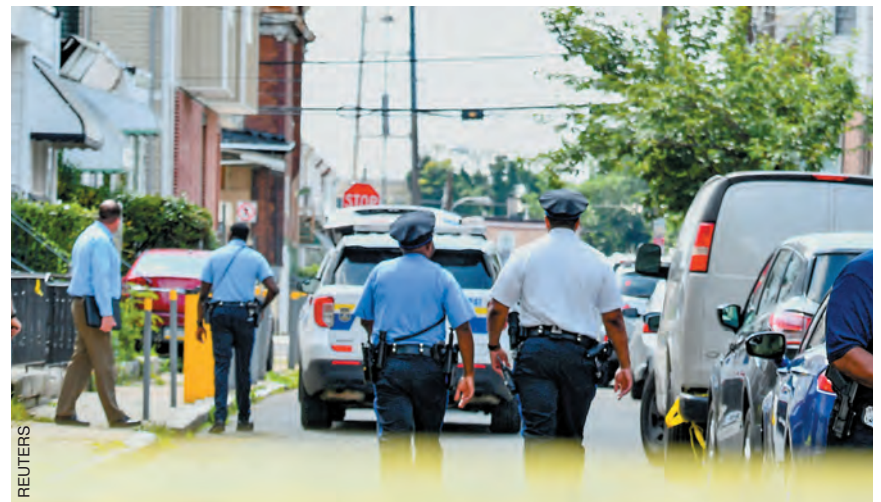
The United States is struggling with a large number of mass shootings and incidents of gun violence. There have been over 340 mass shootings in the country so far in 2023, according to data collected by the Gun Violence Archive, which defines a mass shooting as an incident in which at least four people are shot, excluding the shooter.

Biden condemned the violence and renewed his calls to tighten America's gun laws.

"Our nation has once again endured a wave of tragic and senseless shootings," Biden said in a statement, calling on Republican lawmakers 'to come to the table on meaningful, common sense reforms'.

Citing constitutional protections for gun ownership, Republicans in Congress have generally blocked attempts to significantly reform gun safety laws and oppose Biden's push to reinstate a ban on assault weapons.

By the reckoning of the Gun Violence Archive, the US is on track for one of the worst years of mass shootings. The database has identified 350 such incidents so far this year and warns that should the pace remain steady through the second half of the year, the final total for 2023 could reach 679: about double that recorded in 2018.



Israelis rally against judicial reform

Thousands of Israelis blocked traffic and snarled movement at the country's main international airport, the latest mass demonstration over Benjamin Netanyahu's contentious planned judicial overhaul that has divided the nation

The Netanyahu government's push to pass several overlapping reforms to the country's judiciary has plunged Israel into an unprecedented crisis and divided an already highly polarised country.

Protesters waving Israel's blue-and-white national flag and blowing horns blocked the main thoroughfare outside Ben Gurion Airport's main terminal and demonstrated inside the arrivals hall. Several flights had significant delays, according to the airport website.

Protesters periodically scuffled with police, who dispatched mounted officers to the scene. Police said officers arrested at least 37 people for creating a public disturbance.

"We're against dictatorship," demon-

strator Rami Matan said. "We're against the rules that the ugly government of Netanyahu" wants to impose, Matan said.

Critics say the judicial reforms, which have been tabled by PM Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition government that includes far-right and ultra-orthodox parties, would undermine the authority and independence of Israel's Supreme Court.

Netanyahu and his ultranationalist and ultra-Orthodox political allies are pressing ahead with plans to pass several contentious changes to Israel's judicial system after attempts to reach a compromise with opposition lawmakers disintegrated. The planned overhaul has drawn rebuke from the Biden administration and consternation from American Jews.



Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

City of ancient hills

Humourists joke that the history of Logoisk began 42 million years ago, when an asteroid landed on the place where the village of Malinovka in the Logoisk District is now located and left a crater with a diameter of 15 to 17 kilometres as a memory. Now, however, it is completely hidden under a layer of glacial deposits of the Quaternary Period. Nevertheless, at one time geologists seriously thought that the alien could bring diamond placers with it, but, alas, this assumption was not confirmed in practice.



Logoisk. Church. Early 20th century.



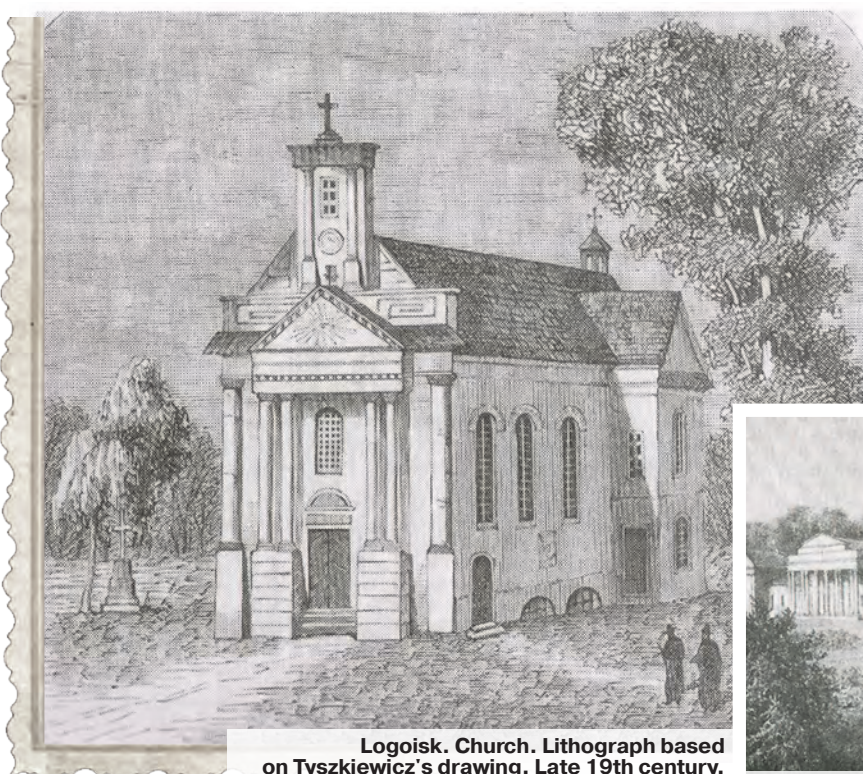
Logoisk. Tyszkiewicz Palace. Early 20th century.

By Vladimir Likhodedov

Logoisk itself is a diamond on the map of the Minsk Region, a beautiful city, skiing resort — cute, beautiful, cosy and well-groomed. It appeared on our lands, albeit with some degree of assumption (like many other cities, the dates of which historians are still passionately arguing about) at the end of the 11th – beginning of the 12th centuries, being mentioned as a fortress city in the Principality of Polotsk. The Russian geographer and chief specialist in statistical research of the Russian Empire at the beginning of the 20th century, Veniamin Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky, wrote that this can be confirmed by ‘partially preserved traces of castles, ramparts, mounds, and partly local legends, characteristic names of tracts and, finally, found in the mounds various things and tools. <...> As for the time when Logoisk was founded [the place was originally called Logozhsk or Logozheshk — author’s note], the first news about it dates back to the 12th century. In 1128, Logoisk became a victim of discord between the princes of Polotsk and Kiev and went to Izyaslav.

This discord, perhaps, somehow influenced the further fate of Logoisk, which was destined for the not entirely fair fate of the ‘stumbling block’.

“Even at the beginning of the 13th century there was a huge magnificent castle, and around it small castles, spread over a space of seven miles; now this castle does not exist, and only its foundations have been preserved, and the place of the castle is overgrown with forest,” Tyan-Shansky wrote. Then the town of Logozheshk disappears from chronicle references for almost a century and appears in them only in the 14th century, being the property of the Gediminoviches, which Vladislav Jagiello gives to his brother Skirgailo, after which



Logoisk. Church. Lithograph based on Tyszkiewicz’s drawing. Late 19th century.



Logoisk. View of the palace from the pond. Lithograph based on Tyszkiewicz’s drawing. Late 19th century.



Logoisk. Tyszkiewicz Palace and Park. Lithograph based on N. Orda’s drawing. Late 19th century.



Logoisk. Tar distillery plant. Early 20th century.

it passes to Prince Vitovt. Then Logoisk repeatedly changed patrons, until in 1505 the Tatar horde of Khan Mehmed Girey destroyed the place and massacred almost all of its inhabitants. The sons of the then owner of Logoisk, Prince Semyon Czartoryski, were taken prisoner, and all documents relating to the historical past were burned when the castle was plundered by the invaders.

The next owners of the town, Tyszkiewicz, managed to restore the castle and built here the Church of the Epiphany with a family tomb. However, the family soon became impoverished, and during the Northern War, Logoisk, along with the castle and the temple, were burned by the Swedes.

In the 19th century, according to the testimony of the same Veniamin Tyan-Shansky, the place was in a fair amount of desolation, “According to the latest data, there are 1,800 inhabitants of both sexes, of which 685 are Jews, although more than a thousand and a half lived here half a century ago.

There are two Orthodox parish churches in the town: of which the wooden Bogoyavlenskaya church was built in 1752. In 1505, the Tatars destroyed and burned this church and the Logoisk Castle, which belonged to Prince S. A. Czartorysky; 26 years later, Vasily Tyszkiewicz, the governor of Podlasie, restored this church; in 1631, Yuri Vasilievich Tyshkevich, after the destruction of the church by fire, built a church for Orthodox Logoisk monks in the Selets estate, and in 1752 Anthony Tyshkevich, Bishop of Zhmud, built the Church of the Epiphany in the castle for the Uniate monastery, founded by him. In 1834, this church came under the jurisdiction of the Orthodox clergy, and from 1845, it was made a parish. Then in the town there is a church, a synagogue, 2 Jewish prayer houses, a school, a tannery, a water mill and more than 10 shops; there was also a paper and linen factory founded by K. Tyszkiewicz and a foundry. As a town, Logoisk is remarkable for its auctions on Sundays. In addition, there are fairs in the town twice a year.”

Since 1801, Pius Tyszkiewicz became the owner of the city, who became famous not only for having lived for 102 years, but also for the fact that he devoted most of his life to local history and at the age of 100 was elected an honorary member of the Vilna Archaeological Commission. In addition, in 1814-1819, he built a two-storey palace in the Empire style in Logoisk, which, unfortunately, was destroyed during the Great Patriotic War. The brothers Konstantin and Evstafiy Tyshkevich also won the respect of their descendants, who created the first museum of antiquities in Belarus, where there were objects found during excavations.

Soviet power came here in 1917. Until 1920, Logoisk was occupied first by German and then by Polish troops. In 1924, it became a regional centre, and in 1938, it received the status of a city. During the World War II, it underwent almost complete destruction, including, unfortunately, all the architectural monuments of past centuries.

Today, Logoisk is incredibly beautiful; it is one of the favourite places to visit for both Minsk residents and tourists from other regions and countries. Here is one of the best ski resorts in the country, the Church of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, the miraculous spring next to the temple, the local history museum named after the brothers Konstantin and Evstafiy Tyshkevich and much more. In a word, a place worth visiting.

Photos from the personal collection of Vladimir Likhodedov

HISTORY

The Minsk Times
Thursday
July 13
2023

9



Real genocide

The project of the Belarus Segodnya Publishing House with the support of the Prosecutor General's Office

By Darya Gotovko

'Not a man, but a fattened boar'

In 1942, the German military intelligence, with the participation of the security services of the Third Reich and the SS, formed a special unit to fight the partisans. It was called the Military Team of Hunters of the East and was commanded by a Russian émigré (his father was German), Abwehr officer Waldemahr Bischler. He was a large landowner before the October Revolution. Nevertheless, he did not want to put up with a new way of life after it. When Germany attacked the Soviet Union, Bischler volunteered to establish order in the occupied territory of Belarus — in the Mogilev Region.

"Fat, he had a disgusting triple-chinned face. Not a man, but a fattened boar. The leader of the punishers was transported in the back of a lorry, because he did not fit in the cab. Bischler had a so-called personal guard, who also arrested local residents, conducted an investigation," this is how the locals described him.

According to the documents, there were about 600 people under the leadership of the rascal. Bischler's team included a bodyguard platoon, six rifle companies, a reconnaissance company, an artillery battalion, and a mortar squad. By the spring of 1943, the Military Team of Hunters of the East numbered 1,500 people. They committed their crimes on the territory of the Smolensk and Bryansk Regions, as well as the Mogilev Region.

'Everyone was waiting for their death hour'

Here are just some of the recollections of witnesses from this criminal case. Maria Konkova, a resident of the village of Yanopolye, Khotimsk District, said that the Bischlerites kept young girls for fun,

"The young beauty Maria Lagutenko was taken from the village. It was said that she was with Bischler as a concubine. Under pain of death, other young women were forced to dance in front of him at night.

When the Germans retreated in the fall, they set fire to houses and entire villages. For example, the Nazis shot 12 people in the village of Gornya."

Another point of bullying of civilians was robbery. They stole everything that came to hand: they took away bread, chickens, pigs, cows, clothes, shoes, bedding and

Conveyor of atrocities

During the war, the Nazis turned the whole of Belarus into one huge conveyor of death. During the years of occupation, over 11,000 of our villages and settlements were partially or completely destroyed by punishers. Information about more than 1,700 of them was established thanks to the work of prosecutors. Previously, before the start of the prosecutor's investigation, it was known about 186 villages that repeated the tragic fate of Khatyn. This list has now been expanded. Now we can safely say that there are at least 216 such settlements, and this information is not final... Today we give an example of the cold-blooded actions of only one team of killers out of hundreds of similar units that raged in our country. The history of the genocide against the Belarusian people is not over yet: it is being written today.

The cries of people, children's crying — that's what accompanied their arrival. Under pain of death, the girls were forced to be concubines, and young children were drowned in the rivers... Old-timers of the Mogilev Region still remember Bischler's punitive detachment. Rascals were famous for their particular cruelty towards civilians, and they left rivers of blood, ashes instead of houses. Before you are the declassified archival documents of the State Security Committee, provided by the Prosecutor General's Office from the materials of the criminal case on the genocide of the Belarusian people.



household utensils. Almost always, this was accompanied by executions or beatings to death of villagers.

Moreover, many testimonies say that the Bischlerites had fun in this way: they climbed trees and opened fire on civilians, then got down and finished off the survivors.

According to the testimony of another witness Agafya Gavrichenko, in 1943, rumours began to circulate around Yanopolye that someone was helping the partisans. This was again recognised by the Bischlerites.

"They announced that our family had been denounced and arrested our mother, father and sister. They also arrested people from eight families, took away a horse, a cow, pigs and chickens.

Everyone was beaten with ramrods. The sister and several people were released, while the rest were kept in a barn and then shot. The corpses were thrown into the cellar, which became an open mass grave," Agafya told the investigators.

They drowned children for not following orders

In 1943, Aleksandr Guley, an active participant in the reprisals against the local population of the Mogilev Region of the Bobruisk District, came to serve in the Bischler detachment. In October of the same year, he was appointed foreman of the squadron of this detachment, in whose position he served until March 1944. From archival documents, it follows that Guley systematically fought with Soviet partisans, carried out mass arrests, executions and robberies of Soviet citizens.

"It [Bischler's detachment] was mainly engaged in punitive activities against civilians and partisans. It consisted exclusively of deserters of the Soviet army and traitors to the Motherland, as well as former partisans who had gone over to the side of the

enemy. The detachment was provided with food from German warehouses, while horses and fodder were obtained by robbing the local population...

In July 1943, there was a case when the Bischlerites drowned three children of a resident of the village of Vyazye in the river because they did not follow their instructions," Guley said during interrogations.

From the testimony of Zinaida Zagorovskaya, a resident of the Bozok village. She spoke about the torture of punishers,

"In March 1944, the Bischlerites shot about 17 residents of the village of Bozok, in the Osipovichy District. For about 15 days, my mother, father, sister, and sister's daughter were under arrest by the Bischlerites. During our time under arrest, we were subjected to severe beatings on suspicion of having links with partisans. After bullying, our family was released from detention, but evicted from their native village. The punishers systematically robbed food and clothing from the population, and each soldier of the Bischler detachment was engaged in robbery at his own discretion, and they were allowed to do so by the command. Local residents were forcibly taken into labour battalions."

By the verdict of the Military Tribunal of the Troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Bobruisk District, Guley was convicted and punished with imprisonment for a term of 25 years in a forced labour camp with a loss of rights for five years without confiscation of property. But the further fate of the thug Bischler is not known for certain. However, in some open sources, two main versions are considered. The first is that the punisher was killed by his own people, and the second is that he died of a heart attack.

Well, let's hope that punishment for what he did caught up with him. However, one can never wash off the stains of blood of peaceful Belarusians even in the afterlife.

EXTENT OF DAMAGE

The calculations showed that Belarus, at modern prices, suffered damage in the amount of more than \$2.3 trillion, or 43 thousand tonnes of gold. At the same time, these figures do not contain data on the losses caused by the Nazi theft of cultural property outside the BSSR, as well as the deportation of over 380 thousand of our civilians into slavery.

IT MUST NOT BE FORGOTTEN

In Belarus, work is actively continuing to search for previously unknown places of extermination of civilians and to preserve the mass graves of the victims of the genocide. For example, the Prosecutor General's Office initiated an increase in the historical and cultural value of the already well-known Trostenets Memorial Complex from the third to the first category. According to the latest estimates, at least 546,000 Soviet people were killed there. The protective legal status of the historical and memorial burial place was assigned to the Bronna Gora forest tract in the Brest Region. At least 50 thousand civilians are buried there in the forest mass.

REFERENCE

According to the Defence Ministry, more than 2.2 million dead were buried in the graves of the Great Patriotic War period, of which more than 1.6 million, or 75 percent, are unknown.

CYNIC LYRICS

Before the investigation of the criminal case on the genocide of the Belarusian people, 140 punitive operations against the civilian population were specified. During these operations, the inhabitants of the BSSR were shot, hanged, burned, drowned, crushed by tanks and destroyed in other most merciless ways. Such operations were carried out by the Nazis throughout the country from the first months of the war. They assigned extremely cynical names to many of them: Winterzauber [Winter Magic], Frühlingsfest [Spring Festival], Erntefest [Harvest Festival], Frühlingsreigentanz [Spring Round Dance], Hasenjagd [Hare Hunt] and Pfingstausflug [Walk to Trinity].



Ihar Makarau is a unique person. He is good-natured, but at the same time firm and principled in a sporting way in his work. In 2004, in Athens, he won the Olympic gold medal and modestly keeps it in his bedside table. The athlete seems to have achieved everything, but he chose to go back to school in order to conquer a new peak. For several years now, the Ihar Makarau Judo School has been operating in Gomel, where, contrary to expectations, he teaches not to win medals, but to become better day by day. We stopped by the master's training and talked about the difficulties of working with children, the importance of education and the development of sports in the regions.



Athens 2004

Ihar Makarau:

- Born July 20th, 1979.
- Honoured Master of Sports.
- Champion of the 2004 Olympics in weight up to 100 kg.
- European champion in 2010, multiple silver and bronze medallist of world and European championships.

By Olga Valchenko

Love from the first step

Before proceeding to holds and throws, the body must be properly warmed up. It is impossible to relax during training — the same elements are repeated many times until the slightest movement is worked out to the absolute.

After training, young athletes leave the tatami, out of breath, but satisfied.

“Is the coach strict?” I ask sympathetically.

“He smiles, but keeps us on our toes!” says 15-year-old Makar Dubinin. “He can tell you off if you are distracted, chatting, being lazy, but mostly he is supportive.”

He has been practicing judo for nine years, he is not chasing medals at world championships, he is going to work in the field of high technologies after school, but he will not refuse training, “We are all getting better, more confident, smarter here!”

14-year-old Veronika Kravchenko, on the contrary, aims for the highest achievements and speaks about the Olympic Games in a dreamy whisper. She came to judo... from figure skating!

“I didn’t like ice at all, but judo is love from the first step on the tatami. It fascinates me when I go out to fight: adrenaline, jitters, scary, but very cool!”

Well-designed chaos

Already, when the last coaching instructions have been distributed, it is possible to communicate with Ihar Makarau himself.

“And when you started, did you dream of the Olympics?”

“Absolutely not!” dismisses the coach with a smile. “Of course not. For us, it was self-actualization and a way to spend leisure time. There were no phones or computers. All we had was school, training, home. At one time, the coach made me interested in this sport. I endured, went to the end. I did not have any click, a sign that there would be big victories ahead. I just performed everyday tasks well, smoothly, confidently. Sport is a process in which you have to constantly check yourself. If it doesn’t work out, only one person is to blame — you yourself. And you always fight fear. Yes, yes,” the Olympic champion confirms, noticing my surprise, “fear is always present. Fear of the unknown. You go out to fight, you don’t know how it will go, in which direction it will all turn, and you start to think over the behaviour, movements, fighting style in your head, wind yourself up. Fear must be crushed. You won against yourself, then you need to defeat the person with whom you are fighting.

In general, as they say, judo is a well-thought-out chaos. You’re out and you know what you want. And you determine

Ihar Makarau also performed at the 2012 Games in London. He was close to the bronze award, but in the battle for third place he lost to Andreas Tölzer from Germany, after which he announced the end of his sports career.



This material from Team.by magazine, which is published by the National Olympic Committee and the Belarus Segodnya Publishing House

Makarau’s system

We looked at how the only Olympic judo champion in Belarus works with young talents



Ivan Yarinovich

At the Olympic Games in Athens on the way to victory, Ihar Makarau defeated such recognised masters as Iveri Jikurauli from Georgia, Dutchman Elco van der Geest, Askhat Zhitkeyev from Kazakhstan. In the finale, he met with the Korean judoka Jang Sung-Ho, and 14 seconds before the expiration of the main time of the match he caught the competitor off guard with his favourite element — a ‘side flip’.

on the spot how to achieve this. And this is the most interesting. When I lost this interest, I left the competition.”

Back to school

“Have you always wanted to be a coach?”

“After all these years, so much knowledge has accumulated that they had to be passed on to someone. I graduated from the magistracy at the Gomel State University, now I am a postgraduate student. The mind is inquisitive, you need to constantly develop, getting a new education is always useful.”

“You study, then you teach, then you coach. We have been accustomed to such employment since childhood. But today, when there are both computers and telephones, is it difficult to bring kids to the gym?”

“It is difficult if we cannot create conditions that would force them to run to this gym. A child of 10-12 years old, for the most part, no longer wants anything, if he or she is not involved with some kind of group, some kind of team, club. Not because they are not able to. They can. It is just laziness. Here it is necessary to endure, discipline, observe the regime, constantly be within certain limits. Doing sports and physical education must be systematic. One needs constant training. A professional athlete should be in the gym 6-7 hours a day. This is work. And it starts at 16.”

“How many pupils do you have now?”

“About 350 people in four gyms, according to the number of coaches. Few people are willing to work with kids. Nerves must be steel. Here it is necessary to make a thousand entrances to the throw. Who will like it? And without it it is impossible. When they are tired they start messing around. You say something, and it is enough for just two minutes. You can’t force a child, you need to find an approach to him or her.”

Power chess

“What is good about judo?”

“Judo gives great versatile development. This is not only the achievement of good physical conditions. A person is formed here. It’s not just physical education, but also spiritual. We teach to talk, respect elders, protect the weak, instil

common cultural norms. Judo is a whole system of education. I do not aim to raise an Olympic champion, but simply give the kids the maximum of what I know and can do. And if there is nothing more to give, I will do my best so that they develop further.”

“But not everyone can do it. Are there any requirements for physical parameters?”

“At the very beginning, flexibility and dexterity are needed. Then speed, strength, coordination are very important. When there is a fight, the opponent rests, he must be ‘persuaded’, and this entails a bunch of auxiliary movements. Endurance is important — the fight lasts four minutes at high speed. And you have to think quickly. Judo is chess, only with power. In four minutes, you need to see a lot, evaluate, work out a strategy and carry it out.”

Sports must be developed in the regions

“Do you count your students’ medals?”

“No. I look and analyse the fights. The quality of the struggle is important to me, it is important how the child grows, whether the child remembers the lessons that I’ve given. I even follow the changes in the moral and volitional qualities, analyse whether the inner core appears, which will allow the child to achieve something in life.”

“How to develop now, when the international arenas are closed?”

“It is extremely difficult for Belarusians. Russia has gone far ahead, we have something to learn from them. But to fight like them, you need to constantly be with them. And this is money. In the place of senior and main coaches, I would have thought out some kind of scheme so that you can forget about momentary results and really work with the team. There are cool kids, you can grow worthy rivals from them if you do not demand a medal now. My opinion: it is wrong that we have all the sport in Minsk. And what can Gomel do when the best

is taken to the capital? If we raise the overall level of judo in Belarus, leaders will be born in competition.

I suggested: let’s meet in the regions. Come to Gomel, Mogilev, Grodno. The locals will be motivated to perform better. I really want judo in Belarus to reach a higher level.”



Ivan Yarinovich



Andrey Sazonov

Photo of the week

Sergei Tsarev thoroughly prepared for *Kupala Night* festival in Alexandria

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



July 13th is International Puzzle Day. This date is dedicated to the birthday of Erno Rubik — a Hungarian architect and designer, the author of the most famous and popular

puzzle in the world — the Rubik's Cube. This puzzle has become not only popular, it has spawned competitions that have grown into international championships in speed assembly (speed cubing).

On July 14th, 1903,

the Great Siberian Route (Trans-Siberian Railway) was put into operation, a railroad connecting the European part of Russia with its middle (Siberia) and eastern (Far East) regions. The actual length of the Trans-Siberian Railway from Moscow to Vladivostok is 9288.2 kilometres. It crosses 16 large rivers, runs along Lake Baikal and along the coast of the Amur Bay of the Sea of Japan.



On July 14th, 1941, the famous Katyusha rocket launcher was used for the first time in combat. It became the first mobile multiple launch rocket system (MLRS) created in the USSR. The first experience of using the new Soviet

missile weapon showed its high combat effectiveness, which was the reason for its quick commissioning and equipping the Red Army Ground Forces with it. 219 Katyusha divisions have already participated in the battles for Berlin.

On July 15th, 1938, the State Puppet Theatre of Belarus was opened in Gomel. From 1950 it was located in Minsk. Since 2000, it has become known as the Belarusian State Puppet Theatre. This is the oldest puppet theatre in the country. Multiple laureate of international puppet theatre festivals.

The performances attract with a fresh, unexpected reading of national, foreign, classical and contemporary works.



On July 17th, 1942, the Battle of Stalingrad began, which became one of the largest battles during the Great Patriotic War. It consisted of two stages — a defensive operation and an offensive operation, and ended on February 2nd, 1943. The victory of the Soviet troops in the Battle of Stalingrad was a turning point in the course of World



War. As a result, the Soviet army snatched the strategic initiative from the enemy and held it until the end of the war.



July 17th is Metallurgist Day in the Republic of Belarus. This is a holiday for all those who work out the steel necessary for

the country from underground ore. This hard work requires a serious strain of physical strength and awareness of responsibility for one's work. Belarus occupies one of the leading places among the CIS countries in terms of the output of metallurgical products.

On July 17th, 1945,

the last conference of the leaders of the Big Three — the leaders of the three largest powers of the Allies of World War II (USSR, USA and Great Britain): Joseph Stalin, Harry Truman and Winston Churchill, opened in Potsdam (a suburb of Berlin). It is known in history as the Potsdam or Berlin Conference. Its main goal was to determine the next steps for the post-war structure of Europe.



On July 18th, 1903, a new Orthodox church was founded in Mogilev in the name of three saints: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom. In 1990, the Cathedral of the Three Hierarchs was restored

to its former appearance. Now it is the Cathedral of the Mogilev-Mstislav Orthodox Diocese. Today, the temple serves the great idea of consolidating the Belarusian nation, the idea of civil peace and creation.

July 18th is Nelson Mandela International Day. It was established by the United Nations General Assembly at the proposal of the delegation of South Africa on November 11th, 2009. It is celebrated on the birthday of South African leader Nelson Mandela in recognition of his contribution to peace and freedom.



On July 19th, 1893, Vladimir Mayakovsky was born (1893-1930), a Russian poet and playwright. Author of lyrical poems, satirical comedies, *A Few Words About Myself* autobiography, essays, film scripts, articles on literature. He took many stories from the events in Belarus and on the Western Front. He repeatedly came to Belarus, spoke to readers in Minsk, Gomel and Vitebsk.

On July 19th, 1988, the Summer Amphitheatre was built in Vitebsk with the largest stage in the country and a hall for 5400 seats. It is here that the *Slavianski Bazaar in Vitebsk* festival is held annually.

