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With such meanings and under various brands, Belarusian manufacturers promote their products to the world market. What surprised them this time, what they presented at the 29th international specialised exhibition and fair Prodexpo 2023, which was held in Minsk - we'll tell you about this and much more.

Беларусь. Belarus

Social and political magazine

No. 11 (1082), 2023

Published since 1930

Founders:

Zviazda Publishing House editorial-and-publishing establishment

Editor-in-Chief:

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www.zviazda.by

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Subscription index — 220034

Registration Certificate No. 8 issued on 16.07.2018 by the Information Ministry of the Republic of Belarus

Беларусь. Belarus is published in English and also contains articles in Belarusian and Chinese

Final responsibility for factual accuracy and interpretation lies with publication authors. Should any article of Беларусь. Belarus be used, reference to the magazine is obligatory.

The editorial office does not bear responsibility for contents of advertisements.

Signed for printing on 23.11.2023
Offset printing. Coated paper.
Format 60x84 1/8.
Conventional printed sheets 13,02
Accounting published sheets 15,12
Circulation — 491

Order

Republican unitary enterprise
"BudMedyyaPrayekt"
Licence No. 02330/71
on 23.01.2014
220123 Minsk, Belarus,
13/61 V. Khoruzhey Street

Cover designer — Boris Gerchikov

© Zviazda Publishing House
editorial-and-publishing
establishment, 2023

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Among the artists of Belarus who create and strengthen a special world of intangible historical and cultural values, the name of Natalya Kuletskaya is very well known.



COUNTRY AND PEOPLE IN THE WORK OF THE MASTER



IN SEARCH OF THE OPTIMAL SAFETY FORMULA

Observers did not left the fact that the last ten days of October were especially rich in international meetings in the Minsk Palace of Independence unnoticed. Without exaggeration, the foreign policy agenda prevailed in the work schedule of the President of Belarus at that time. Within just one of the days, Aleksandr Lukashenko alternately met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Hungary, Péter Szijjártó, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Sergei Lavrov, who arrived in Minsk to participate in the international conference Eurasian Security: Reality and Prospects in a Transforming World. The basis of those meetings and negotiations was the search for an optimal formula for security on the Eurasian continent. Including economic with an emphasis on mutually beneficial cooperation. The key topics for discussion were such topics as building a fair world order, Belarusian-Russian relations, the situation in Ukraine and the future of the EU.

The key role of strategic partnership

At a meeting with Sergei Lavrov, Aleksandr Lukashenko confirmed that Belarus is a reliable ally of Russia. In general, in recent years, Belarusian-Russian integration has demonstrated good dynamics. The withdrawal of many Western companies from the Russian market and the sanctions policy are pushing Minsk and Moscow towards closer cooperation in all areas. This is expressed both in record trade turnover figures and in the expansion of cooperation with new promising projects. Despite various kinds of external pressure, Belarus and Russia are successfully implementing their plans. The implementation of 28 Union programmes is progressing. In particular, as of October 1st of this year, 835 out of 993 tasks have been implemented. And trade turnover for January — August 2023 exceeded \$31 billion (growth rate — 113 percent compared to the same period last year). It is significant that Belarus, which is small in size, is among the top five in terms of trade turnover with the huge, gigantic Russia. This also says a lot. According to the President, Belarus and Russia have developed certain directions of movement (for example, microelectronics and others), along which they act as a single whole.

Sergei Lavrov thanked the Head of State for the initiative to hold an international conference on Eurasian security. In his opinion, this is more relevant now than ever. The conclusion was made on the basis that 'the single huge continent given to us by God and history, the richest in natural resources, Europe, under the dictation of the Americans, decided to split into two camps, as it was in the Soviet era, the Cold War era. But even then economic ties were not interrupted, and now, under pressure from Washington, Europe is facing direct losses'.

The head of the Russian Foreign Ministry gave an example of a speech at a conference in Minsk by Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó, who noted that energy resources in Europe are five times more expensive than in the United States. Deindustrialization, transfer of production... Lavrov believes that this was one of the tasks of the Americans — to weaken Europe, not to give it the opportunity to straighten its shoulders economically and become independent. An extremely relevant topic.

Sergei Lavrov also added that at the conference, both Belarus and Russia emphasized their openness to cooperation with everyone only on an equal and fair basis, and the Hungarian side adheres to the same position, "We do not close the door in these processes to anyone. But if Europe now prefers to isolate itself, then, as you said, we will have to move from the division of labour to the independent, sovereign creation of everything that we need for development and security. But, again, if and when they come to their senses and realise that they are depriving themselves of mutually beneficial

economic prospects, and return, probably then you and I, along with everyone who will cooperate in integration structures, will see what ideas they come up with."

How to build a security architecture

Later, in a conversation with journalists, Sergei Lavrov stated that Eurasia today is the most promising region of the world, since strategic transport and logistics communications pass through it and can pass through it. There are already many of them, but in order to use all the advantages of this continent, it is necessary to create



■ Meeting of the President of the Republic of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia Sergei Lavrov

new transport corridors — North — South, East — West. All this makes joining forces simply mandatory for all normal countries, "If the West believes that it is not in their interests, but in their interests to give all their money to armaments for the Kyiv regime and suffer colossal economic losses, releasing the United States into absolute leaders, losing the most from the war in Ukraine that they unleashed, then we cannot do anything here. But this does not mean that everyone else should wait until reason prevails. Therefore, we have



Meeting of the President of the Republic of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hungary Peter Szijjarto

been promoting Eurasian cooperation for a long time and in different formats.”

According to the minister, a significant part of Eurasia does not want to wait for the end of the campaign, which is unfolding and spurred on by the United States of America. While all this is happening, normal countries that do not seek hegemony through wars against other countries should engage in cooperation, which is what we are doing, noted Sergei Lavrov. This was exactly what the conference in Minsk, which took place on the initiative of the President of Belarus, was about. Its participants also spoke about this. The head of the Russian Foreign Ministry is confident that it is necessary to build an architecture of security and economic cooperation, an architecture that will not depend ‘on the whims and neo-colonial instincts of our neighbors in the west of this vast continent’.

Sergei Lavrov also commented on the statement of NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg that the alliance needs new production capacities and a lot of weapons to ensure peace and freedom. The head of the Russian Foreign Ministry said that as a child he looked at Soviet cartoons from the Cold War and wondered why ‘the imperialists are portrayed ugly, as if they were so bloodthirsty, worse than the wolf from Little Red Riding Hood’. But now, when he hears statements from some leaders, NATO first of all, and other Western structures, he recalls these cartoons... The last two summits in Madrid and Vilnius directly proclaimed NATO’s global responsibility for world security. And they do not hide the fact that they need to be responsible for security in Asia in order to contain China and isolate Russia. Such bloodthirsty plans, Lavrov believes, have never led to any good.

In response to Western accusations that the Russian side is allegedly refusing negotiations with Kyiv, Sergei Lavrov emphasised, “When we are accused of being against negotiations, this is a lie. We know that the West continues to incite the Kyiv regime to continue the war. And if we are talking about negotiations, then let Zelenskyy cancel the decree that he signed a year ago and which he forbade himself and all his officials from negotiating with the government of Vladimir Putin. All this is hypocrisy, which is expressed in idle talk about negotiations, which Russia allegedly avoids. We never shy away from serious offers. There are simply no serious proposals after they were thwarted by the Anglo-Saxons in April 2022. But once on the battlefield (to resolve issues), then on the battlefield. This will, of course, continue. The whole truth is on our side.”

Significant clarification of Minsk’s position

For obvious reasons, statesmen and politicians of the European Union are currently not frequent guests in Belarus. Hungary is one of those few European countries that pursues policies primarily in its national interests. This is the position of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, he is not afraid to voice it publicly, and his team follows this line. Welcoming the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Hungary, Péter Szijjártó, to the Palace of Independence, Aleksandr Lukashenko said, “I’m pleased to meet you. I thought, you are probably the most media-heavy foreign minister right now. Especially in our space. We see you often and hear you a lot. Not only your statements, but also those of our good friend Mr. Orbán.”

The Head of State drew attention to the fact that for some reason the EU believes that Belarus is an opponent of this unification. Aleksandr Lukashenko clarified Minsk’s

position, “You know, we are not vindictive people. And, despite the current turbulence in the European Union and the sanctions that the European Union is imposing against us, you should know that the President of Belarus is an ardent supporter of the preservation of the European Union. Not because I really love the European Union, but because the European Union, together with the USA, China, maybe Russia, India, to some extent, are strong pillars of our existence, of our planet. And if this support is pulled out from under this system, it will be very bad for everyone. Therefore, as a European state (and the geographical centre is in our Polotsk in the north of Belarus) we are absolutely in favour of the existence of the European Union. We really want the European Union to be a powerful, strong, sovereign and independent union. We are aimed at this, and you should know this: despite all the nuances in relations and even the policy that the union is pursuing today in relation to Belarus, we are supporters of the union.”

Regarding sanctions, the Head of State noted that this is not the first time Belarus has encountered them, “We have largely overcome the sanctions. Yes, there are problems in connection with the restructuring of logistics, primarily financial issues, payment processing, and so on. But I think we can cope with these problems. In principle, we managed, but there are certain losses. I think we will catch up and get away from these problems next year. It’s just alarming that we can destroy even the bad, as we criticize it, system of world order that exists today. And we are taking more and more steps (I’m already an experienced politician, I see this, I’ve been doing this seriously) towards a full-scale war using the most lethal weapons.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko drew attention to the role of the United States in escalating tension, “The fact that the Americans are supplying ATACMS missiles to the Ukrainians, they must understand that they are escalating this war. Russia will never come to terms with this, and neither will we. Therefore, we need to resist this in every possible way if we do not want to again find ourselves in this hot cauldron of not opposition, but a terrible, deadly war.”

As for Minsk’s position on Ukraine, it is approximately the same as that of Hungary, the Head of State said, “We don’t need this war, just like you. We are neighbours, there is a war going on in our house. Much, of course, would depend on the European Union, although I understand that there is powerful pressure from overseas, but I am absolutely convinced that if the Europeans wanted, we could end this war and agree, draw certain conclusions so that this would not happen again.”

Speaking about bilateral economic relations, the President stated that, unfortunately, they are deteriorating, “Not our fault, you know what the reason is. If the Hungarians, the Hungarian leadership, have any wishes to work in Belarus, we will be happy to accept your enterprises, companies, and create the most favourable working conditions.”



In humanitarian terms, Aleksandr Lukashenko thanked the Hungarian side for the Belarusian athletes who have the opportunity to be at home in Hungary and play their home matches.

The President assured Péter Szijjártó of Minsk’s readiness to develop interaction with Budapest, “If we are useful to Hungary, we are ready to act in this direction. We are very grateful to you. We are grateful people. I think the time will come when you and I will be able, by and large, to pay for your good policy towards Belarus.”

The Head of State asked the Hungarian minister to convey his best wishes to Viktor Orbán, “It’s difficult for us to come there, almost impossible now, but he can fly in at any time. Let’s talk about serious issues. I think it will be useful.”

VERBATIM

Péter Szijjártó, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Hungary, “I believe in dialogue. We want peace in our neighbourhood. There is a war going on next door for which we are in no way responsible. But we pay the price for it. Hungarians also die in this war, because the Hungarian national minority lives in Ukraine. We don’t want people to die. We would like this war to end as quickly as possible. That is why we are hastening a truce and hastening a ceasefire. I sincerely hope that the opportunity for this arises sooner rather than later. We know very well that without dialogue, without communication, this will never be possible. Closing channels of communication is a denial of hope for peace. That is why we are so actively in contact with your Foreign Minister. Sergei (Sergei Aleynik, head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus) did me the honour of coming to Budapest. I accepted with pleasure his invitation to participate in this conference (International Conference on Eurasian Security in Minsk) and thank you, Mr. President, for the dialogue.”

Vladimir Velikhov
photo by BELTA



DIALOGUE FOR THE SAKE OF DECOUPLING COMPLEX GEOPOLITICAL KNOTS

In Minsk, political scientists and experts from almost thirty countries at the international conference Eurasian Security: Reality and Prospects in a Transforming World spoke in different languages, but about one thing: how to prevent the world from sliding down the 'escalation ladder' to a global catastrophe.

Holding such events is not new for Belarus. Many experts participating in the conference focused on the logical choice of the Minsk platform for the discussion on Eurasian security. And, as the forum participants admitted, it is sorely missed today. After all, only by hearing each other can a compromise be found.

Find answers to questions

Once upon a time in Minsk they tried to find a formula for safety for everyone. Then they discussed how to move away from the edge of the abyss. Unfortunately, the European continent, which has survived two world wars, is once again faced with a bloody conflict. The prospects for other outbreaks to flare up in various regions of the world are growing. And this, no matter how cynical it sounds, becomes commonplace. Now, in fact, the whole world is faced with the task of holding on and not stepping into the abyss of mutually assured destruction.

In the meantime, we are confidently moving in this direction, along the so-called 'escalation ladder', noted Foreign Minister of Belarus Sergei Aleynik during his speech. According to him, many people, on different sides,

are asking questions: why the lessons of two world wars could not save our continent from the current extreme degree of confrontation and mutual distrust? Why did the numerous safety mechanisms that were so painstakingly and persistently developed by our predecessors in the 70s, 80s and early 90s of the last century not work? A lot has been said on this topic and many copies have been broken, continued Sergei Aleynik, "In our opinion, and this is obvious to many, the reason for the current situation is the NATO-centric security model for the elite, which the West has promoted and continues to promote. This does not mean that today we will use this platform for some sweeping accusations. Not at all. Our goal is frank, inclusive discussion. The West never allowed NATO to become a full-fledged international organisation. And now, instead of a platform for serious discussion of issues of war and peace, it is simply being turned into a model of a 'rules-based order'."

There is strength in unity

Western-centricity is becoming a thing of the past. It is being replaced by multipolarity and polycentricity. Most countries support a variety of development paths and want their choices to be respected and not imposed on to accept alien principles. And Eurasia occupies a key place in this



Three proposals from Belarus

While the West is now not ready to talk about common security, but only talks about its own, then Belarus proceeds from the fact that the time for dialogue will come sooner or later. And we have specific ideas in this regard. Sergei Aleynik voiced three proposals from Belarus to form a model of Eurasian security.

◆ Documenting the diversity of civilizations

We have already formulated the idea of preparing the Diversity Charter for the 21st Century. Eurasian countries and even wider (countries of the global East and South, and in fact, the global majority) could openly and transparently develop a document that would set out the principles for building a fair world order and reflect the fact of the diversity of civilizations. Western countries could also become participants in the process.

◆ Development of dialogue between the countries of the Eurasian space

We need to seriously think about how to stop the movement along the escalation ladder, which has almost completely destroyed mutual trust. Dialogue is needed. As a stage in the future global process, dialogue between the countries of the Eurasian space should be developed, using all formats of interstate communication, including the platforms of international organisations and integration associations.

We should not forget about the OSCE, which, despite all its shortcomings, is an integral element of the European, and therefore the Eurasian, security system.

◆ Holding a summit of heads of state of the Eurasian space

We all need to strive to attend a serious summit of heads of state of the Eurasian space to discuss the future architecture of Eurasian security. An architecture that would ensure lasting peace on our common large continent, the peace necessary for progress, creation and sustainable development of countries and peoples.

Challenges of the times

Despite the risk of being subject to serious criticism in some parts of Europe, Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Péter Szijjártó attended the conference. As he admitted during his speech, he decided to come to Minsk partly because global security is now in its worst state since the end of the Cold War. The head of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry drew attention to the fact that today security issues for Europe as an integral part of Eurasia are only one of the challenges. The European Union is faced with another serious problem — a significant drop in the level of competitiveness of the European economy. Péter Szijjártó recalled that last year, for the first time, China took second



modern world, the natural right of peoples to determine the paths and models of their own development, implementing the most important principle of the UN, written in its charter — the sovereign equality of states.

Sergei Lavrov noted that a sign of the times is the desire of an increasing number of states of the global South and East to strengthen their sovereignty in all areas, to implement a pragmatic, independent nationally oriented course in world affairs, which was most clearly reflected in the recently begun process of rapid expansion of BRICS. By opting for zero-sum geopolitical games, the states of the North Atlantic Alliance, led by Washington, have provoked a serious security crisis in the European part of our continent. And they have been doing this for many years, Sergei Lavrov emphasised, “Without the direct encouragement of the United States, Kyiv would not have dared to take the path of destroying everything Russian — language, education, media, culture, Orthodoxy; it would not have dared to legally and physically exterminate the opposition and openly introduce Nazi orders, including legislation. The United States and its satellites do not hide their goals: to maintain dominance and monopolize the right to make globally significant decisions.

process, Sergei Aleynik is sure. What should the rest of the European countries and, in general, the countries of Greater Eurasia, which have serious and justified fears for their security, do? Probably, to strengthen existing and form new international organisations. Such as the EAEU, SCO, BRICS, CSTO, CICA, “Here we see examples of a new galaxy, a new generation of organisations that operate on fair principles.”

If we manage to unite those who understand that the future lies in Eurasian interconnectedness, based on a single security system, stable economic ties, energy and transport and logistics corridors, then everyone will benefit, the head of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry emphasised.

The message from many European countries today is that there is no need for any discussion on security. It is only necessary, forgetting about the origins of the current conflicts, to sacrifice everything to victory over Russia, to force it to obey Western ‘rules’. And Belarus at the same time as its ally. And everyone else too. “It should be recognised that European security today does not exist either as a fact or as a system,” the minister emphasised. “NATO members believe that they are under the umbrella of their alliance. An alliance that ignores all other structures and mechanisms that could ensure common security for all.”

place from the EU in terms of its share of global GDP. The Hungarian minister wondered how the European economy should develop in this situation.

An expression that has been mentioned many times by Western European politicians: a trade zone from Lisbon to Vladivostok. For many years this was the ideal that should become the basis for the economic development of Europe. But today this is difficult, since ties between Russia and Europe have been reduced to nothing in recent years. For Europe to be strong again, two things are needed: peace and dialogue.

A pragmatic course in world affairs

The geopolitical balance of power continues to change not in favour of the collective West. This is beginning to be recognised, including publicly, by representatives of Western elites who are talking about the end of the post-Cold War era. President Biden spoke about this, and not so long ago, President Macron and other leaders of Western countries. These main trends also influence the international processes unfolding in Eurasia, said Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. In his firm belief, international relations are experiencing new, truly epochal tectonic shifts. A more equitable multipolar world order is expanding before our eyes, based on the cultural and civilizational diversity of the



Unilateral, non-consensus rules of the game are being imposed on the international community. And in relation to those who disagree, the collective West uses a wide range of methods of pressure, unilateral coercive measures to the point of demonization in the global information space.”

Taking into account new realities

Modern security problems dictate the need to intensify work to deepen interaction with other authoritative international organizations and individual countries. First of all, with those who share our goals and principles. Cooperation with the United Nations plays a key role here, especially on the peacekeeping and anti-terrorism tracks. Administrative, legal and organisational conditions are being formed for building a collective peacekeeping potential of the CSTO in UN peacekeeping activities. In this regard, CSTO Secretary General Imangali Tasmagambetov expressed the opinion that countries alone cannot withstand new challenges and threats to regional security. According to him, only within the framework of effective multifunctional associations do Eurasian states have a chance to preserve their sovereignty and security. Provided that these countries really understand the value of such an association and adhere to its principles, they share Eurasian values, “During its existence, the CSTO has convincingly proven that it is a capable structure, an integral part of the international security system. Our organisation’s commitment to the unifying agenda, ensuring the supremacy of international law and democratic principles in the international arena, and the search for a comprehensive and long-term resolution of crisis situations primarily through political and diplomatic means remains unchanged.”

At the same time, taking into account new realities, experts believe, there is a growing need to update some aspects of the CSTO’s activities and bring them into line with the requirements of the time. In particular, systemic actions are needed to develop effective mechanisms for responding to existing crises and preventing possible conflicts. Security in Eurasia is a very complex and multifaceted topic that is relevant at all times. Geopolitical processes on the Eurasian continent, unfortunately, are determined by the significantly intensified rivalry between two worldviews and systems — the Global West and the Global East. According to First Deputy Secretary General of the CIS Leonid Anfimov, the course taken by some Western countries to destroy the fundamental norms and values of international law increases disproportions in economic development and provokes conflicts in territories where relative peace and tranquillity are supported by many years of efforts of the UN



and regional international organisations, “I think you will agree that the events in Ukraine and the next Palestinian-Israeli conflict are nothing more than a direct consequence of the West’s failure to comply with the relevant resolutions of the UN and its Security Council, the desire to live in an illusory world created by it, where the dominant position of one country should be the basis for building a world order common to all peoples.”

OPINIONS OF CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

Guy Mettan, Swiss political scientist, member of the cantonal parliament of Geneva, “It is very important now to build bridges of friendship between Eurasia and the collective West — Europe and the USA. In this way we can come to some kind of resolution. In fact, in the last two years, this is the first opportunity for all of us to get together and talk about the most significant topics. And we can say that today we are trying to open the doors of two worlds and start communicating with each other, starting a dialogue.”

Aleksandr Shpakovsky, Counsellor Envoy of the Belarusian Embassy in the Russian Federation, “Belarus strives to regain its status as a significant platform for international dialogue. Naturally, at the present stage the world is in a situation of

deepening security crisis, but the ground for detente must be prepared, not forgetting that the gunpowder must be kept dry.” Roman Vasilenko, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, “We highly appreciate the initiative of Belarus to conduct this dialogue, proposed within the framework of its chairmanship in the CSTO. Current global challenges have brought into sharper focus than ever the problems associated with ensuring regional and global security. Instead of the consolidation of states to overcome common problems, unfortunately, we see an escalation of rivalry between world powers in the military, political, economic, technological and ideological spheres. Kazakhstan considers it necessary to strictly and fully comply with the UN Charter and other norms of international law.”

Pyotr Petrovsky, political scientist, “Minsk once again acted as a traditional donor of stability and peace, a platform for dialogue between East and West, North and South, which can be a gathering point that will build bridges rather than build walls. Our country continues to demonstrate its openness. We involve the parties in dialogue, despite the fact that the collective West, unfortunately, today is more inclined towards an illusionistic position and building a new Berlin Wall.”

Heinz Gärtner, political scientist, professor at the Faculty of Political Science at Vienna and Danube Universities, “It is very important to continue dialogue with all participants in the modern conflict. Do not break contacts and continue the discussion — this is the only way to find a way out.”

So, a frank discussion in Minsk about the prospects for Eurasian security in the context of the crisis of the existing world order, chronic military-political contradictions between key players and the almost complete lack of communications between them included a discussion of several specific topics, including global and regional geopolitical prerequisites for Eurasian security, economic integration and conjugation in favour of its unified architecture, interaction of international and regional organisations in the Eurasian space, strategic stability, threats and opportunities for Eurasia in new conditions. As a result, the conference made it possible to outline the promising contours of Eurasian security. In general, the importance of discussing such topics is obvious. The whole world is in a difficult state from the point of view of global security.

Aleksey Fedosov
photo by BELTA





DIALOGUE ENCOURAGES ACTION

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The level of economic cooperation between Belarus and Cuba must correspond to the level of political relations and humanitarian interaction. President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko announced this at a meeting with Prime Minister of Cuba Manuel Marrero Cruz in Minsk.

Good base for development

Today, Belarus and Cuba continue to maintain active political dialogue at the highest and highest levels. Both states completely coincide in their views on most issues on the international agenda, including the need to build a new world order — a fair multipolar world. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Belarus remained practically the only republic that maintained relations with Cuba in the same way. In October 1997, a decision was made to transform the Belarusian trade mission in Cuba into an embassy, which became the first diplomatic mission of the Republic of Belarus in Latin America and the Caribbean. In July 1972, Fidel Castro visited Belarus. The leader of the Cuban communists then walked around the main square of Minsk, visited Khatyn and the Mound of Glory. In 2000, the President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko flew to Cuba and met with Fidel Castro. The heads of the two countries signed an agreement on friendship and cooperation. The Cuban leader then called Belarus ‘the most friendly of the countries in the post-Soviet space’ and awarded the Belarusian leader the Order of José Martí. This is one of the three highest awards on Liberty Island. Then visits took place in 2006 and 2012. In turn, the President of the Republic of Cuba Miguel Mario Díaz-Canel Bermúdez paid an official visit to Belarus in October 2019. Trade between Belarus and Cuba is showing good results this year. In January—September, trade turnover reached \$10.5 million, the growth rate compared to the same period last year was 307 percent. The main volume of Belarusian exports to Cuba are tractors, trucks, internal combustion engines, tires, spare parts, agricultural machinery and equipment. The leading exporters of Belarusian products to Cuba were such enterprises as

Belagromash, Minsk Tractor Works, Minsk Automobile Plant and others. Medicines are mainly imported from Cuba. In February of last year and November of this year, the Belarusian side transferred humanitarian aid to Cuba, consisting of medicines and food.

The economy needs to be boosted

So, Belarus and Cuba have been linked by diplomatic relations for more than three decades. In many ways, countries view the world from the same perspective. They consistently advocate for the exclusive right to independently determine their own destiny and development model. They do not accept outside dictates. They conduct an interested bilateral dialogue and support each other on international platforms. In short, in this part the level of mutual understanding is quite high. But business interaction is clearly lagging behind. This is what Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised during the meeting: “We need to seriously bring economic and trade issues closer to political issues.” The Head of State warmly welcomed the guest within the walls of the Palace of Independence, “We have always maintained the warmest and friendly relations with you. You should know that we will continue to adhere to the same approaches. At the diplomatic and political levels, one might say, at the ideological level, we have absolutely no differences.” At the same time, Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that the basis of all this, the foundation, is the economy. Preparing for this meeting, studying the entire spectrum of trade and economic relations, the President of Belarus discovered that it was necessary to seriously bring economic and trade issues closer to political issues. There is only one conclusion from his side: trade and economic ties lag significantly behind political and humanitarian ones.

The president emphasised that he is deeply immersed in the agenda of Belarusian-Cuban relations, “I see that for decades now we have been going through some issues from meeting to meeting, trying to somehow voice them, but there is no movement on them.”

That is why, in the firm conviction of the Head of State, as with other countries, it is necessary to conduct an audit of bilateral relations and identify those areas in which there will be cooperation, and those problems that need to be solved today will be solved.

The parties have complete mutual understanding

According to the President, Cuba represents one of the foundations of Belarusian policy in Latin America, “What has remained and remains unchanged is that we, as a high-tech country, will build our relations with Latin America. And, naturally, the fulcrum, so to speak, will always be Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua in the first place. We consider your visit precisely in this regard. We very much hope that we will significantly increase our trade and economic relations. It’s not enough that our trade turnover just barely exceeds 10 million dollars.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko, addressing the Prime Minister of Cuba, called for better use of the competencies of the two countries in order to deepen trade and economic relations and raise them to the level of political and humanitarian ones. Manuel Marrero Cruz thanked the President of Belarus for the opportunity to meet and the warm welcome organised in Minsk for the Cuban side, and also conveyed greetings to Aleksandr Lukashenko from the leadership of Cuba and personally from President Miguel Mario Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, who, according to him, remembers very warmly his visit to Minsk in 2019. As for the comments of the President of Belarus regarding the current level of trade and economic cooperation between the countries, the Prime Minister of Cuba expressed full agreement, “You have made the most accurate analysis of bilateral trade and economic relations between Cuba and Belarus. I share your opinion. We also aim to offer to change this situation and focus cooperation on specific projects.”

Interaction priorities have been determined

In a conversation with journalists, Manuel Marrero Cruz, summing up the meeting with the President, first of all emphasized, “We completely agreed with Aleksandr Lukashenko that we are not satisfied with the level of trade and economic cooperation that exists at the moment. The main goal is to bring the level of trade and economic interaction to the level that exists in the field of political cooperation. We have done a lot of work, identified priority areas of interaction, it remains to flesh out bilateral projects.”



Prime Minister of Cuba Manuel Marrero Cruz

First of all, we are talking about strengthening the agricultural sector in Cuba and increasing food production. The head of the Cuban Government also outlined specific projects, “At the moment we are talking about creating a joint production with the participation of a meat dairy company on the Belarusian side, and on the Cuban side — an enterprise that has the appropriate production infrastructure. The main goal is to attract Belarusian raw materials and produce a wide range of dairy products on the premises of the Cuban enterprise.”

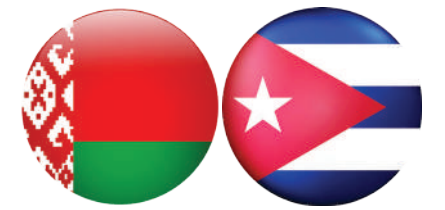
Manuel Marrero Cruz is convinced that such cooperation will not only close the Cuban domestic market, but will also provide an opportunity to export products to the Caribbean region and other Latin American countries. The possibility of meat processing is also being discussed.

Another priority topic for cooperation is industry. According to the Prime Minister of Cuba, concrete practical steps have already been taken to organize the assembly of Belarusian tractors, trucks and buses.

Another important area is the field of biotechnology and medicines. It was not for nothing that during the visit it was planned to sign three contracts that would allow the registration and sale of Cuban pharmaceutical products in Belarus, as well as Belarusian medications in Cuba. In the scientific field, a number of agreements have also been signed between the parties, which will be implemented.

Vladimir Khromov
photo by BELTA

TIME CAN'T WAIT



Head of the Belarusian Government Roman Golovchenko held talks with the Prime Minister of Cuba

The parties discussed in detail promising projects to enhance interaction. Among them is the assembly of Belarusian tractors on Freedom Island. The possibility of creating a joint venture in the agricultural sector is also being considered. The sphere of biotechnology and drug production can also serve as an impetus for intensifying cooperation. At a meeting in the Government, the possibility of creating a production facility that would sell medicines to the EAEU market was discussed.

The distinguished guest at 11, Sovetskaya Str., was received according to all the canons of official visits — with a company of guard of honour and the playing of the anthems of the two countries. Roman Golovchenko greeted his Cuban colleague as a good friend. After all, heads of government have already held talks in Sochi this year. Then, promising projects for cooperation were discussed in detail. Now there was a kind of synchronisation and revision of the agreements reached.

Only through joint efforts

At the beginning of the negotiations, Roman Golovchenko noted that Belarus and Cuba are long-standing and time-tested partners. Relations are exclusively friendly and open. The countries have traditionally supported each other on international platforms for many years and have similar opinions regarding the geopolitical processes taking place in the world. The Prime Minister said that countries are jointly resisting the dictatorship of sanctions

and advocating for the speedy construction of a new, fair world order. That Belarus has never changed and will not change its position on the unacceptability of the economic, trade and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba, and will continue to support the country in its just demands for the abolition of this illegitimate pressure, which causes significant harm to the Cuban people. He emphasised that the Belarusian side appreciates the support of Cuba on international platforms: “In the context of chaotic illegitimate sanctions restrictions that are indiscriminately applied by Western countries, the value of the support of true friends is especially great.” And in such conditions, countries need to jointly defend sovereignty, independence and develop bilateral interaction for the benefit of both peoples.



Sensible development mechanisms

The Belarusian Prime Minister also outlined specific areas in which the countries need to intensify interaction, “The products of our industrial complex are well known and in demand in Cuba. Belarusian manufacturers of agricultural, cargo, passenger, municipal and other equipment are ready to meet all the needs of your country.” In addition, the Belarusian Prime Minister noted, this year it was possible to significantly intensify cooperation in the field of agriculture and food supplies. The export of Belarusian food to Cuba has increased, and supplies from Cuba to Belarus have also increased significantly. But it is necessary to determine, in addition to trade flows, mechanisms for the implementation of projects

being developed in the field of joint food production in Cuba. Cuba is widely known around the world for its sustainable and effective healthcare system, so expanding cooperation in the medical field is an important priority. Despite the fact that mutual supplies of medical goods and pharmaceutical products are carried out quite intensively, according to the prime minister, it is necessary to increase the volume of trade in these important goods. The head of the Belarusian Government emphasised how it is necessary to deepen industrial cooperation in the field of drug production. By the way, American sanctions do not allow Cuba to purchase products in the required volumes. Therefore, in these conditions, the Prime Minister named the wider use of mutual supplies concluded between the countries as one of the tools for enhancing trade. Experts of the parties



are preparing to sign a protocol to this agreement. Roman Golovchenko proposed to quickly complete its approval, sign and carry out the necessary internal procedures. The most important issue within the framework of this agreement is to find those additional commodity items through which an increase in the volume of mutual supplies can be achieved. At the same time, the price parameters of these positions must be competitive, the Belarusian Prime Minister noted. By the way, during the previous meeting, which took place in Sochi, the Belarusian side gave the Prime Minister of Cuba a list of commodity items that are of interest to our country. In addition, it was discussed that the Development Bank of Belarus is ready to expand cooperation on the issue of export lending for the supply of Belarusian goods to Cuba.



There are already certain developments in financing the supply of Belarusian industrial equipment to Cuba. The Prime Minister proposed that the results of the negotiations be substantively considered by the Belarusian—Cuban joint commission on trade and economic cooperation, which could hold its meeting in Minsk as early as the first quarter of next year.

Integration expands the market

Following the negotiations, Cuban Prime Minister Manuel Marrero Cruz said that the countries are discussing the creation of a number of joint productions. One of the areas is mechanical engineering. “We are very interested in importing or assembling tractors in Cuba. The feasibility of



such a project is now being worked out so that it is profitable. Every project like this requires a feasibility study, it needs to benefit both countries,” said Manuel Marrero Cruz. According to him, there are developments in the field of cooperation in the agricultural sector. Certain Belarusian products are imported to Freedom Island. We are mainly talking about the supply of powdered milk - this product is in very high demand in Cuba. But here we are interested in taking this cooperation to a new level and not only importing finished products, but also creating joint production in Cuba, so that the output products are sent not only to the Cuban market, but also to the Latin American region in general. Manuel Marrero Cruz also emphasised the good prospects for cooperation in pharmacology. According to the Prime Minister of Cuba, the field of biotechnology and the production of medicines can serve as an impetus for intensifying cooperation and lead to the development of interaction in other industries. Systematic work is already underway to register drugs from Belarus in Cuba and vice versa. But, the Cuban Prime Minister expressed his wish, he would like to see in the near future there would be production facilities in Belarus that would sell joint drugs to the EAEU market. By the way, it was not by chance that Manuel Marrero Cruz spoke about the Eurasian space. Cuba is an observer country in the EAEU. Therefore, the expected effect from the implementation of the Belarusian-Cuban agreements can be safely multiplied several times.

Vsevolod Yevseyev
photo by BELTA

"BY BUILDING A NUCLEAR POWER PLANT, WE DID THE RIGHT THING"



What will a nuclear power plant give to the country and people, will a second nuclear power plant be built in Belarus, and what will the establishment of friendly relations with Poland and Lithuania depend on. Details of the President's working trip to Ostrovets, where Aleksandr Lukashenko met with representatives of the labour collective and builders of the BelNPP, social infrastructure workers and city residents.

There has long been a good tradition of giving gifts and opening objects that are significant for Belarus and people on November 7th. One of these gifts for the Day of the October Revolution was the completion of construction and acceptance into operation of the Belarusian nuclear power plant. This event is, without any exaggeration, historical and epochal. One might even say, akin to a revolution. But the revolution is peaceful and technological. After all, we are talking about mastering the highest technologies, thanks to which a real breakthrough will be made in many sectors of the economy. In addition, Belarus has received a reliable, economical, environmentally friendly source of energy for decades to come. And given that at one time the President personally initiated the construction of a nuclear power plant, he could not ignore the final chord in the construction of one of the most significant facilities for the country. In communication with residents of Ostrovets, Aleksandr Lukashenko said, "Any holiday should have some meaning. In Soviet times, people were always given gifts for great holidays... Today I arrived on the eve of the Great October Day to present a great gift to our Belarusian people. This is truly a gift! Three years ago, when launching the first power unit, I said that a historic day had arrived. The era of the peaceful atom has begun. And indeed, having received this wonderful object as a gift on November 7th in the difficult year of 2020 and today the second unit, I believe that we did the right thing by creating this miracle. Nice station. This is the future."

FACTS AND FIGURES FROM THE REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE MINISTER OF ENERGY VIKTOR KARANKEVICH

The effect on Belarus from the construction of nuclear power plants:

The country's dependence on imported natural gas has been reduced. Since the inclusion of the first power unit of the Belarusian NPP into the unified energy system, the station has generated a total of more than 20 billion kWh of electricity, which made it possible to replace 5.6 billion cubic meters of natural gas.

The currency burden on the economy has decreased by more than \$650 million per year.

The share of natural gas in the fuel and energy balance of the country will decrease to 65 percent.

Greenhouse gas emissions decreased by more than 9 million tons.

The nuclear power plant ensures the satisfaction of the growing demand for electricity by the real sector of the economy and the population.

The station has become a driver of the development of related sectors of the economy and the expansion of the use of electricity. A number of innovative projects are being prepared for implementation — in industry, science, medicine.



Reliable, safe and economical station

So, the construction of the station is finally completed. Let us remind you that the first power unit was put into operation on June 10th, 2021. On October 24th, 2023, the Ministry of Emergency Situations issued a license to operate the second power unit, and on November 1st, the acceptance committee signed an act of acceptance of the unit for commercial operation. Now it is operating at rated power. With the commissioning of the second power unit, the BelNPP will annually generate about 18 billion kWh and provide more than 40 percent of the country's domestic electricity needs.

Meeting the President at the station, Energy Minister Viktor Karankevich confidently and not without pride reported, "Your instructions for the construction and commissioning of a nuclear power plant have been completed. This large-scale project was carried out together with our strategic partner — the state corporation Rosatom. This is a reliable, safe, economical station that is already working for the country's economy. BelNPP is not only a strengthening of energy security, it is truly a big step in the technological development of the national economy. And all this is an improvement in people's quality of life."

"This is a completely different quality of life," said Rosatom General Director Aleksei Likhachev.

Then there were the words of Viktor Karankevich that the Belarusian Nuclear Power Plant is not only a strengthening of the country's energy security, but also a

big step in the technological development of the national economy and improving the quality of life of people.

Aleksei Likhachev handed over to Aleksandr Lukashenko a symbolic passport of the nuclear power plant with the following words, "Service life from 60 years. We expect that it will work up to 100."

"I don't want to let you leave Belarus," noted Aleksandr Lukashenko.

"We don't want to leave," responded Aleksei Likhachev, noting the comfortable and fruitful work at the site together with Belarusian specialists.

New horizons for collaboration

The construction of the Belarusian nuclear power plant is truly a powerful strategic project. Larger plans have not yet been implemented in the collaboration of Belarusian and Russian specialists. But it would be a mistake to consider it the crowning achievement of interaction. On the contrary, this is entering a new high-tech level, which opens up new horizons for collaboration in a variety of areas.

At peak times, up to 9 thousand people worked simultaneously on the construction of nuclear power plants. 50/50 — our people and Russians. Solid experience has been acquired, and Aleksei Likhachev invited his Belarusian colleagues to join Rosatom's foreign construction projects, both in Russia and abroad. We are talking about the construction of nuclear power plants in Bangladesh, Egypt, and Hungary. By the way, Belarusian specialists are already involved in the Egyptian project. The General Director of Rosatom

assured that as their presence in the global market expands, the Russians will continue to go hand in hand with the Belarusians. According to him, Russian specialists built the nuclear power plant in Belarus 'like for themselves' and will treat it the same way during the operation stage, including warranty service, provision of spare parts, repair work, personnel training, fuel supplies, and so on, "Without in any way claiming control or technological sovereignty, we will provide everything that is needed in the most comfortable way."

Infrastructure for electric transport is important

When talking about possible prospects for the development of nuclear energy in Belarus, the President asked Aleksei Likhachev where, in his opinion, the third power unit could be located if such a need suddenly arises in the future. The head of Rosatom noted that, if necessary, it is possible to develop the Ostrovets site, "We actually consider the energy system as, if not unified, then in many ways very complementary between Russia and Belarus. In this sense, it is necessary for our ministries of energy and our governments to develop a plan."

However, when making plans for the future, we must proceed from prospects for 60—70 years, Aleksei Likhachev is convinced. For example, it is already obvious that a higher level of electric propulsion will take place, and for this it is necessary to generate electricity. In this sense, sustainable green nuclear energy is the basis even for electric propulsion. For this we need appropriate gas stations and mechanisms. There is a lot to learn from Belarus here, says the General Director of Rosatom.

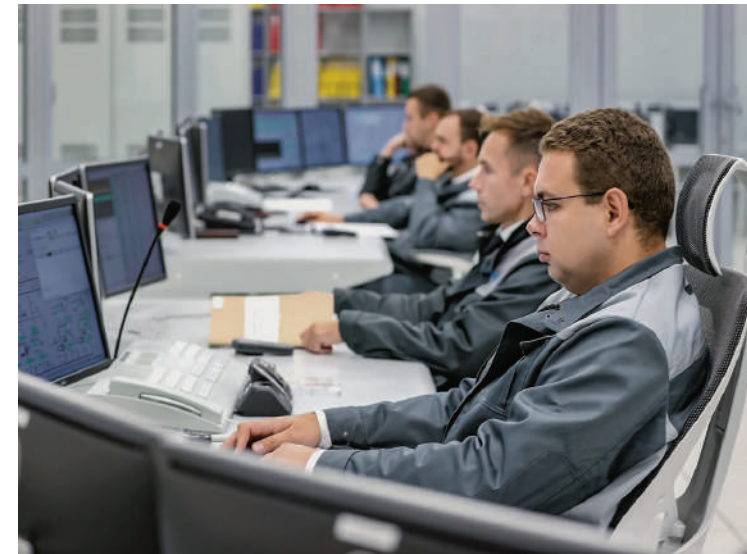
Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that he discussed with Russian President Vladimir Putin the electrification of the road from Brest to Moscow, Kazan and beyond — the creation of infrastructure for electric transport. Moreover, technologies in this area are moving forward.

Cooperation development plans

Aleksei Likhachev also spoke about new areas of activity that are planned to be developed in cooperation between Belarusian and Russian specialists. One of them is nuclear medicine, "We work with the Ministry of Health, the Alexandrov Cancer Centre, and the Academy of Sciences. We already supply linear accelerators for remote therapy and contact complexes for high-dose therapy."

A related area is radiopharmaceuticals and isotopes. A large plant for their production is being built in the Kaluga Region, and Rosatom is ready to include medical institutions of Belarus in the supply system of the most modern such drugs. This is a completely import-substituting project.

The head of Rosatom also said that just the other day the nuclear medicine building at the Russian paediatric oncology centre was commissioned, "We learned a lot. This is our first facility of this level. We are working with the Ministry of Health of Belarus on the issue of creating a



similar centre in Belarus."

According to Aleksei Likhachev, this plan can be implemented within the framework of the programs of the Union State.

Regarding the development of electric propulsion, the head of Rosatom highly appreciated the achievements of BELAZ, Minsk Automobile Plant, and Belkommunmash. Russian energy storage devices are predominantly used here, but our partners are ready to participate in the creation of a gigafactory for their production in Belarus. Moreover, both for transport and for use in industry.

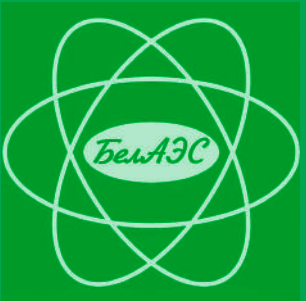
A joint project to create composite materials is also at the start stage, "An absolutely closed import-independent chain has been created in Russia. We are ready to replicate it in Belarus. There is a matter of demand. If the demand is great, we will localise it (production on site), if it is small, we will supply it."

Interaction in digital technologies also seems promising. Moreover, Rosatom made a discovery for itself that Belarus has developments that exceed their competencies.

Aleksei Likhachev named a number of other promising areas of cooperation in high-tech industries, noting that this list is far from exhaustive. The challenges of strengthening technological sovereignty open up truly limitless opportunities.

Man-made transformation of the area

The next point on the presidential route was the Ostrovets Central Regional Clinical Hospital. Here, the Chairman of the Grodno Region Executive Committee Vladimir Karanik reported in detail on the social and economic development of the region. And Ostrovets in this sense became that very



THIS IS ALL FOR THE BENEFIT OF PEOPLE

At the exit from the Ostrovets Central Regional Clinical Hospital, Aleksandr Lukashenko was greeted with applause by representatives of the labour collective and builders of the BelNPP, social infrastructure workers and residents of Ostrovets. For them, this is an opportunity to ask the Head of State questions on the topic of the day. But first, important key points from the President himself.

Gifts for the people

The Head of State recalled that at one time, when public holidays were established, October Revolution Day was preserved in the country, despite the fact that young people did not quite understand it, “I thought, after all, we shouldn’t deprive people of this holiday. But any holiday should have some meaning. In Soviet times, people were always given gifts for great holidays. The people actually gave gifts to themselves. Well, I say: we will — bosses, officials — together with the people we will create, build something. And then the leaders will already make gifts to the people.” Thus, this tradition has been preserved in sovereign Belarus. According to the President, it has not yet taken root 100 percent, but ‘people are getting used to it’, especially since the media are widely covering the commissioning of various facilities for these holidays. And considering that at one time Aleksandr Lukashenko personally initiated the construction of the BelNPP, that’s why it was he who came to Ostrovets with an important mission, “I arrived on the eve of the Great October Day to present a great gift to our Belarusian people. This is truly a gift!”

“Once upon a time, two sites were identified for the construction of a nuclear power plant, but the final decision turned out to be in favor of Ostrovets: it was necessary to develop this region. As a result, the construction of a nuclear power plant made it possible to ‘breathe life into this northwestern region,” said the Head of State. He also praised the Governor of the Grodno Region Vladimir Karanik and the Assistant to the President — Inspector for the Grodno Region Yuri Karaev for the work they are doing in the region, “Development is underway. Flying up to the nuclear power plant, I was generally delighted and amazed. Well, I haven’t seen anything like this anywhere, even in the West — every scrap is clean, beautifully sown, processed. They know how to greet the President. But further away there — not so much... I see that too. But well done. That means they know how to do it.” The President also drew attention to the fact that, given the experience of the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, safety issues have always been given priority attention. And we managed to restore the Gomel Region, which suffered the most from the disaster, and bring it back to life.



illustrative example when a small regional centre, in which it was possible to implement the largest strategic project in the history of independent Belarus, completely changed the face of the region. Vladimir Karanik emphasised that Ostrovets has changed dramatically. And the area has become different. Back in 2010, it was a small agricultural area, where 51 percent was agriculture, the rest was trade and a little construction. According to data for nine months of this year, about 90 percent here is industry. The district not only changed its face, it changed the face of the region. Aleksandr Lukashenko inquired in detail about the situation in the agro-industrial complex, in the labour market, the development of various sectors of the economy in the region, wage growth, and social life in the region. The head of the region cited indicative figures: if in 2010 Ostrovets accounted for less than 0.1 percent in the industrial structure of the entire region, now it is already 7.3 percent. Last year, a quarter of the regional construction volumes were carried out in the Ostrovets District. 467.5 million roubles were invested in the district’s infrastructure: this is 50 kilometres of roads, 7 kilometres of streets, a railway line... The city also built 386 thousand square meters of housing, five kindergartens, two schools, two healthcare facilities, a number of sports and cultural facilities. And the salary of residents of the regional centre is on average 20 percent higher than the regional average.

A city that is developing

Vladimir Karanik described the work done and the effect as unprecedented investment in human capital. The population of Ostrovets has almost doubled. If in 2010

the birth rate in the region was almost 2 percent lower than the regional average, now it is 30 percent higher. Ostrovets is the first district to close the demographic scissors. This is a city that is developing. And it’s not just developing. This is truly a city to live in, its residents are convinced. A little later, during a conversation with the President, the Chairman of the Ostrovets District Council of Deputies, Irina Talchuk, warmly and wholeheartedly thanked the Head of State for the fact that the nuclear power plant was built here. This decision, according to the woman, became a lucky ticket for the small, once provincial town, “Today it is a big, beautiful, modern city. Today our children do not leave us, but on the contrary, they return. I am sure that our grandchildren will live with us.” “But this is just the beginning,” noted Aleksandr Lukashenko. “Ostrovets is a city to live in. Therefore, I want to assure you that we have always supported, support and will support you and your policies, which you are pursuing precisely to improve the well-being of the people,” added Irina Talchuk.

Healthcare is a priority issue

The Chief Medical Officer of the Ostrovets Central Regional Clinical Hospital, Vladimir Mozheiko, told Aleksandr Lukashenko in detail about the work of the institution, which today is an example of a reference clinic for residents of nearby areas. The Central Regional Clinical Hospital includes an inpatient treatment and diagnostic complex, a polyclinic, a nursing hospital with an outpatient clinic for a general practitioner, three outpatient clinics for general practitioners, 15 medical and obstetric stations, a health centre at the construction site of the Belarusian NPP, a health centre at Belarusian NPP. Listening to the report of the Chief Medical Officer and asking clarifying questions, the Head of State traditionally scaled up the topics raised. In this case, on the organisation of the work of the health care system in the country as a whole (by levels and segments): they were talking about medical care in rural areas, the work of first-aid posts, outpatient clinics, their equipment, the assignment of specialists, their wages and the provision of housing. Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised that the system of work of healthcare institutions at various levels is an important issue, especially since the President has recently returned to it more than once. In the Ostrovets Central Regional Clinical Hospital itself, the President got acquainted with the work of the departments, talked with the medical staff and honorary donors. The Head of State highly appreciated the results of what he saw.

Vladimir **Velikhov**



The power of pure energy

Speaking about the importance of nuclear power plants for people’s lives, the President emphasised that without electricity we will not be able to develop. This is confirmed today by the growing energy needs of both industry and the population. In particular, for heating residential buildings. Moreover, now electricity tariffs for these purposes have actually been equalized with gas ones. The only limiting factor today is the weakness of power transmission networks, which cannot always cope with the growing load. However, work is underway in this direction as well. The President stated, “We have already reached the point that we fulfil 90 percent of requests. We haven’t completed ten yet. But this is due to the fact that people simply rushed to electricity and everyone wants electricity in their home... Therefore, we are investing a lot of money in order to replace transformers, substations and lay networks to you in order to supply the required amount of energy.” The prospects for the production of passenger electric vehicles were also touched upon. Aleksandr Lukashenko said that the Government promised to surprise him soon by presenting a sample of such a product, “I know that they make their own electric car. The body will be like that of a Geely, it’s good, people like it, and they’ll have their own electric car.” Well, we already have our own electric passenger transport for a long time. Moreover, the demand for it is stable not

only among domestic consumers, but also foreign ones. Aleksandr Lukashenko summarised, “There will be a huge increase in electricity consumption. I won’t say that I was so smart then (when making the decision on the BelNPP), I foresaw this, but I understood that this electricity would be needed. And I understood that if we launch a nuclear power plant, then what should we do about the Bereza and Novolukoml state district power plants?” It turned out that now the product of these gas-fired stations is in demand. The Head of State recalled the ambiguity of society’s reaction to the idea of building a Belarusian nuclear power plant. However, today the situation has changed radically, “Using the example of Ostrovets, I was convinced that people understood, people who live very close... Well, already being involved in construction, I realised: the devil is not as terrible as he is painted. This is a normal facility. I won’t say that it is more dangerous than others. But it must be used responsibly.”

Into tomorrow with new technologies

The President summarised Belarusian achievements in the field of recent high technologies. We went into space. And not only with our own satellites, our equipment works in devices of different countries. Together with Russia, we are participating in the formation of a joint space constellation of satellites. With the support of China, the Belarusian

CONTEXT

During his visit to the BelNPP, the President also answered questions from Russian journalists

About the savings on the construction of the station

NTV correspondent Sergei Savin asked how the funds from Russian credit resources saved on the construction of the BelNPP could be used.

“Take less, give less. It’s natural. As for distribution networks, we have absolutely no problems. If you need something, it’s not a problem. But today this is the point... Naturally, we have been talking for a long time in Belarus, for now, at the level of discussions, we need to bring society to this, about the construction of a second nuclear power plant. More precisely, doubling capacity. We would like to double what we have now — and then Belarusians will be good. As an intermediate option, it is possible to build a third block. It will be significantly cheaper. People, I have the competencies, I installed the third unit — now your power is increased by half... The main thing for me was not only to build the station, but to have the competencies that the Russians have. We got it.”

Meanwhile, this judgment, according to the Head of State, does not yet mean a final decision has been made. The development was followed by the issue of the prospects for exporting electricity from the BelNPP. Initially it was planned to supply it to our western neighbours. Will common sense prevail there, or perhaps need will force neighbours to export Belarusian electricity?

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that time goes by — everything changes, “And I’m sure that the main principle of the buyer is ‘where it’s cheaper, the quality is good — take it there’. The quality is exceptional. There is no such station in the world. This is the newest in all respects. Good quality.”

The Head of State is convinced that the terms of electricity supply would be attractive for Lithuania and Latvia, “But we are missing the most important thing: we will not escape Ukraine. We will have to work in Ukraine. No Americans or the West will help them. Vladimir Vladimirovich (Putin) and I talk a lot on this topic. They will come to us for help. A

huge amount of work. We will have to help the Ukrainians. And these will buy if it’s cheaper from us. Look, power will change in America and politics in Europe will be completely different. Everything changes. We need to look not 10 years ahead, but 50—60 years. And this station is a look into the future. Well, Russia is developing. If electricity is needed, everything is connected. Russia will take away the electricity.”

About the note of the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs against the Belarusian Nuclear Power Plant

VGTRK journalist Anastasia Sakhovskaya recalled the nervous note from the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry regarding the launch of the second power unit of the Belarusian NPP. What will happen if there is a third and subsequent bunits?

The President replied, “It was the madmen who sent the note. The people of Lithuania have nothing to do with these people. Believe me, I know what’s going on there. There the top lives on its own. I even know the grandfathers and parents of those who lead Lithuania today.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko recalled that at one time he invited specialists from the Ignalina nuclear power plant closed in Lithuania to come to Belarus, “People there, 3 thousand people, have nowhere to go. Come. We need people. We taught hundreds of people in Russia, and these are ready-made specialists. Come to us, we will give you a job, housing, etc.”

The neighbours were offered cooperation.

“But they (the Lithuanian authorities) at the command of certain people from overseas built a different policy,” the President noted. “This is not the first note. Let them send it. We have enough space in the toilets. So let them send it.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised that the construction process of the BelNPP was absolutely open, which was confirmed by the IAEA. Foreign journalists were also invited. The head of state summarised, “They don’t want to, it is their right. We don’t really worry about this topic.”

about the prospects for building a second nuclear power plant in Belarus. Is it possible to talk today about whether it will happen and where? Aleksandr Lukashenko replied, “I don’t know where the second station will be. This is the first thing. Secondly, what is the second station? If the second one is like that, it’s doubling the power. There are two units, we need two more, modern ones. Maybe we’ll come up with something new by then with the Russians. And today I am simply throwing this thesis into society at the level of discussion.”

The President also touched upon the issue of financing such a project. He recalled that the Russians not only built the



BelNPP, but also allocated credit resources for this on very favourable terms. These funds were saved significantly. The Head of State spoke about a conversation he once had with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, “I say: listen, if we save something at this station, will you give us that money — the saved money? He laughed so much, looked at me, he didn’t believe it. He says: let’s finish the station, if we save something, then you and I will sit down and discuss it. I recently talked to him. Out of the 10.5 billion dollars they allocated to us, we used only 6 billion. In a business-like manner. This means that for the rest we, in principle, can build almost two units. Therefore, we can ask the Russians to leave this money that we did not take to us in the country. Moreover, the loan is very profitable. But we know that they now have problems through the roof. They already help us: both gas and oil, I don’t want to list them here anymore. They always help with any question. Well, of course, we are not in debt either. Where we can, we help with everything... We are now in great demand in Russia. Therefore, this source of financing may also be saved money.” Regarding the question of where to build, the President noted, “This must be considered...”

According to the Head of State, the Government and the National Academy of Sciences propose to make appropriate calculations and present options. According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, it is quite possible that on the existing site near Ostrovets, the implementation of the project of two additional power units may turn out to be more profitable. After all, in addition to the station itself, there are already production facilities here to support construction. This is not the main expense item. Such facilities can also be

transferred to a new site. But it will still be cheaper locally. The President welcomes the fact that people have already figured it out and support such plans. He drew attention to an important aspect, “There is no need to be afraid of Chernobyl or Fukushima. Experts are already telling me today why the explosions occurred there. Because the specialists, those who served, failed. It’s not about the equipment. But this station was built in a safer manner. Therefore, if you are afraid of wolves, do not go into the forest.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko summarised, “That’s why we make sure it’s safe. Where will we build? If we build, I will report to you and consult with you before making such a decision. This is what I promise you. We won’t do anything without people.”

At the same time, the Head of State emphasised that the current supply of electricity will be enough for several generations. However, we must look ahead, “Who knows how the world will develop. Let there be this second station. I’m a proponent of this.”

On the prospects of relations with Poland and Lithuania

Pavel Markun, a history teacher at one of Ostrovets schools, asked the President whether it was possible to restore friendly relations between Belarus and Poland and whether the Lithuanian people would force their government to work for the interests of their state, and not dance to the tune of Washington and Brussels.

Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised, “I have absolutely no doubt about it. And Lithuania — we will restore relations,



and Poland — they will not go away. There is a basic principle: neighbours cannot live badly. They are from God, they are not chosen. And if you’re a neighbour, well, for a while, yes, you’ll go up to the fence, throw a stone at the neighbouring garden, etc., and then they’ll all get together and drink a glass together. There are various disagreements, quarrels — these are transitory. The times will come when we will live with them as we always have.”

According to the President, we did not offend anyone. Yes, the Lithuanians were against the construction of the BelNPP, but we are a sovereign state and make decisions independently. Lithuania, under pressure from the EU, closed its Ignalina plant, and then Aleksandr Lukashenko proposed making our nuclear power plant a common one, “You closed yours (now they regret it), and we will produce electricity and sell it to you at normal tariffs. Your people will work for us. I offered it to them in a humane way. But they are not the ones running the country.”

Now, according to Aleksandr Lukashenko, the Poles and Lithuanians are ‘spreading rot’ on us because of migrants. But we were not the initiators of this crisis. EU countries stopped cooperating with us, including in the field of migration policy, and introduced sanctions against Belarus, so why should we now be a ‘sink’ for people who go to Europe?

“I organised a visa-free regime. So they began to scare their people that we would recruit them here. What does recruit mean? Well, don’t be recruited. Or are we forcing someone? There are no such facts. And they make everything up and accuse us of doing something against them.”

The Head of State emphasised that we do not close our doors to our neighbours. Everything depends on them, but Belarus will not engage in dialogue if they impose any conditions on us.



“We are a sovereign independent state, we will pursue the policy that is in the interests of our people. That says it all. If they are ready for this, tomorrow we are ready to shake hands with each other anywhere and are ready to cooperate with them.”

About our southern neighbour

In this context, the President also touched upon the topic of Ukraine, “Ukraine will still be ours. Nobody needs this Ukraine. The mess in the Middle East... I warned you when the war started, I called Zelensky: Volodya, listen to me, an experienced person, I’ve been working for many years. As soon as there’s some kind of mess somewhere, they’ll forget about you. So what’s going on? Ukraine is receding into the background (due to aggravation in the Middle East). You need to think with your head before dragging the country into this or that adventure.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko illustrated his words with the example of Afghanistan, when the Americans left there, “They threw it and left. It will be exactly the same here. They (USA) are far away, they are big, they don’t need this for a hundred years. Their politics are muddy. Brew something and in this muddy water it is easier to catch fish. This is their policy. And everything else is consumable, as in Ukraine today. Therefore, this region is our region. In the sense that we will be together. And look — Europe will crawl towards us, towards Russia. Because Europe today is being torn apart by the Americans as they please. But she cannot resist, because everything is tied up in the American market — loans, property, etc. You see what kind of politicians there are. They don’t think about the people...”

There were other questions for the President. And not one of them went unanswered.

Vasily **Kharitonov**



MADE IN BELARUS, PRESENTED IN SHANGHAI

Shanghai hosted the China International Import Expo (CIIE) for the sixth time, which is held under the patronage of President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping. This year more than 150 countries took part in it. Since the founding of CIIE, Belarus has also been regularly represented at the exhibition.

This year, more than seventy Belarusian enterprises and organisations, as part of the National Exposition organised by the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Belinterexpo exhibition enterprise, demonstrated in Shanghai their best products, achievements and developments that are promising for promotion to the Chinese market. The official opening of the exposition was attended by Minister of Economy Aleksandr Chervyakov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to China Yuri Senko, Deputy Minister of Commerce of the People's Republic of China Lin Ji and Head of the Administration of Great Stone Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park Aleksandr Yaroshenko. The Belarusian Country Pavilion, created in accordance with the

architectural concept of the Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre building, attracted attention with its special decor and bright illumination. Here, visitors to the exhibition could enjoy performances by opera soloists and ballet dancers, as well as the Serenade string quintet. The pavilion hosted displays of products from Bellegprom concern enterprises and collections of fur products from Belkoopsoyuz. Visitors were also greeted by holograms of young people in Belarusian national costumes.

Offers for every taste

From the first day of the exhibition, the Days of Regions of Belarus were held in the country pavilion with the invitation of Chinese partners from the provinces — sister cities of the

IN A HIGHLY COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT

Belarusian regions and the capital. Minsk Day took place in Shanghai, to which Chinese partners, representatives of such sister cities of Minsk as Beijing, Changchun, Shenzhen and Shanghai, and everyone present were invited. Guests could see and taste the products of the enterprises and communicate with their representatives. B2B meetings were also held. Minsk presented the guests with the products of the most 'delicious' enterprises located on its territory. Among them are confectionery factories and the Minsk Bakery Plant.

At the same time, negotiations were held between the capital's delegation in the Office of External Relations of Shanghai and the city leadership on the further development of sister city ties. In addition, a memorandum was signed between the Minsk City Organisation of Belarusian Women's Union Public Association and the Shanghai Women's Federation.

As for the economy, today we can see good dynamics and an increase in trade turnover between Minsk and China. This is how First Deputy Chairwoman of the Minsk City Executive Committee Nadezhda Lazarevich commented on participation in the exhibition. Indeed, according to the results of last year, the growth of mutual trade turnover amounted to more than 120 percent, in the first half of this year — over 130 percent. Trade turnover goes in both directions. "We are very grateful to China for being open to all kinds of relationships. Minsk and Shanghai are sister cities. We held meetings, discussed promising areas of cooperation, and invited our partners to hold Shanghai Days in Minsk. We discussed interaction in education and healthcare. We have something to share with each other. When we exchange information, unite even more, the results of cooperation will be better. With great pleasure they presented our industrial potential and said that we have many enterprises that use machines manufactured in the People's Republic of China. We talked about the products that are already supplied to China and, I am sure, will be supplied in even larger volumes in the future," noted Nadezhda Lazarevich. Meanwhile, it became known that Chinese partners are interested in creating production and logistics companies in the Brest Region. This news was announced by Deputy Chairman of the Brest Regional Executive Committee Dmitry Gorodetsky on the sidelines of the International Import Exhibition in Shanghai. The Vice-Governor emphasised that cooperation with China is very important. And it's not for nothing that the Days of the Brest Region were held at the Shanghai exhibition. Here, at the exhibition, a fairly impressive delegation from this region of Belarus visited, which included representatives of enterprises and organisations, healthcare institutions, tourism, and educational institutions.

The Brest Region has sister city relations with the Chinese provinces of Liaoning, Shanxi, Anhui and Hubei. Today, when visiting Anhui province, Brest and Bereza District signed agreements with the cities of Hefei and Bengbu, and the Brest Regional Clinical Hospital signed agreements with Anhui Medical University. In addition, as part of the exhibition, contracts between regional enterprises and potential Chinese partners were concluded. According to the vice-governor, relations with China are developing dynamically. This year,

China has become the second foreign trade partner for the Brest Region after Russia. The pace and dynamics of trade and economic relations among Brest residents are encouraging. In just eight months of this year, the volume of trade turnover with China amounted to almost \$280 million and increased almost one and a half times. Thanks to contacts with business, Chinese foreign direct investment in the region is growing significantly. In addition, based on the results of negotiations with Chinese partners, it is clear that there is interest in creating joint production facilities in the region; cooperation between enterprises that will provide logistics for the movement of goods under the One Belt, One Road programme is obvious.

Favourable prospects are obvious

Yes, from the first day of the exhibition, the Days of Regions of Belarus were held in the country pavilion with the invitation of Chinese partners and representatives of the sister provinces of the Belarusian regions and the capital. The Brest Region presented the economic, cultural, tourism, educational, and medical potential of the region with an emphasis on exporting goods and services to China. At the collective stand of the Brestmyasomolprom concern, processing enterprises in the region presented their products with tasting. The educational potential of the region was presented by the Rector of the Brest State Technical University Sergei Kasperovich. Its chief physician, Professor Aleksandr Karpitsky, spoke about the medical services and capabilities of the Brest Regional Clinical Hospital.

The head of the delegation of the Brest Region, Deputy Chairman of the Brest Regional Executive Committee Dmitry Gorodetsky noted that on the first day of the exhibition, good prospects for cooperation were obvious, "Comprehensive modernisation is important for the Brest Region, and with it, technical re-equipment and the introduction of advanced technologies. And this is, first of all, an investment. We offer investment projects in mechanical engineering, light, food,





woodworking, and chemical industries. We are ready to provide a site for the implementation of a project to build an educational centre. We offered services for the transfer of wagons from narrow European gauge to broad gauge, as well as the implementation of a project to create a transport and logistics centre in the region.”

At the exhibition, the Brest Region and Anhui province signed the Action Plan for the Development of Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technical and Cultural Cooperation for 2023-2025. Brest concluded a cooperation agreement with the capital of Anhui province, the city of Hefei. The city of Bengbu became twinned with Bereza. Brest Regional Clinical Hospital signed a memorandum with Anhui University of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Trading is good, but investing is better

The export and investment potential, reflecting the key industries of the region, was presented in Shanghai by the Vitebsk region. These are petrochemicals, production of composite and electrical insulating materials, meat, dairy and food industries, flax production and processing, logistics. These areas are successfully developing in China, therefore, during the exhibition, issues of interaction in the new economic conditions that are emerging in the world today

were discussed with Chinese colleagues.

12 enterprises of the northern region, as well as the Vitebsk FEZ, where 54 residents work, representing the main areas of activity of the region, made their presentations at the exhibition. Taking into account the theme of the import forum, where, as a rule, the world's leading companies are represented, enterprises in the region are guided to search for modern technological solutions, using new types of payments, delivery of goods, where Chinese partners have gained good experience. It is also worth noting that the Vitebsk Region has established good relations with the provinces of Jiangxi, Heilongjiang, Shandong, Guizhou and the China-SCO Interregional Cooperation Demonstration Zone. This year alone, 13 documents were signed, covering the development of sister city ties, interaction in the scientific, technical and educational spheres, as well as agreements between enterprises. In fact, every month representatives of the Vitebsk Region travel to China or host Chinese partners.

The representative delegation of the region in Shanghai was headed by the Chairman of the Vitebsk Regional Executive Committee, Aleksandr Subbotin, who shared his observations, “Chinese partners do not just want to trade or buy products from us, but there is already talk about joint scientific and educational processes, the creation of a centre for technology



transfer. It was even a little unexpected for us, but I think this is the next step in our relationship.”

For the region, participation in the exhibition pursued specific goals. In particular, the Vitebsk Regional Executive Committee signed the Memorandum of Cooperation on the Creation of an Industrial Park on the Site of the City of Qingdao in Shandong Province. The tasks of the Park, as follows from the agreement, are to represent the interests of enterprises of the Vitebsk Region in China, assist in promoting their products, look for partners, and work out payment and logistics schemes. Chinese partners involve specialists who have experience working with Belarusian products in matters of customs clearance, certification, advertising on the Chinese market, and the use of electronic trading. This type of service is especially in demand now by Belarusian enterprises.

In general, the Chinese market is becoming more and more promising for manufacturers in the Vitebsk Region. The growth of exports to the regions of China is gaining momentum. This is evidenced by the figures: this year, compared to 8 months of last year, deliveries have increased 1.4 times, and compared to 2018 — more than 5 times. Export is carried out by 25 enterprises in the region.

Relationships continue to strengthen

Today, the growing interest of representatives of the business community of Belarus in the Celestial Empire is more obvious than ever. So the presentations of the trade, economic, investment, cultural and tourism potential of the Grodno Region took place in Shanghai. Bilateral documents were signed, and a tasting of Belarusian products took place. Deputy Chairman of the Grodno Regional Executive Committee Vitaly Nevera led the delegation that represented the region. He said that in order to strengthen friendly ties between the Grodno Region and sister provinces, the Regional Executive Committee sent invitations to the provinces of Gansu, Hainan,



Fujian with an offer to visit the National Exhibition. During the event, the Agreement on the Establishment of Sister Ties Between the City of Dunhuang of Gansu Province and the Novogrudok District of the Grodno Region was signed.

And mutual trade between the region and China since the beginning of the year has amounted to about \$130 million, while exports of Grodno products exceeded \$62 million. In general, cooperation between the Grodno Region and China has a rich history, the foundation of which was laid back in 2007. Since then, more than a dozen partnership documents have been signed in various fields of activity. Currently, relations continue to strengthen and have good prospects, despite the geographic distance of the residents. A small example. Two processing enterprises from Lida received a unique opportunity to expand their supply geography. Director of Lidapishchekontsentraty JSC Vyacheslav Gorbachev told what exactly potential partners from the Celestial Empire saw, “We sent 90 types of products for presentation and tasting at the national exhibition in Shanghai. In May, we hosted a Chinese delegation, its representatives compiled a list of positions that could potentially be of interest to the residents of the Middle Kingdom. They paid special attention to the design of the packaging. In general, we export 20 percent of the total volume. The main market is the Russian Federation, but we ship products to Bulgaria, Germany, Latvia, Israel and other countries. Only last month we discovered the People's Republic of China, where the first small trial batch worth 9 thousand dollars went.”

At the presentation of the Mogilev Region, which is actively developing the Chinese vector of cooperation, the region presented a list of investment projects in which it would like to see the participation of Chinese partners. There is interest here in the construction of a Chinese restaurant in Mogilev, and it is also proposed to build a sanatorium in the Belynych District for the purposes of recreational and medical tourism. The regional centre is interested in implementing an investment

project in the Podnikolye city park. The park's development concept provides for the construction of a tourist complex with a restaurant, an artificial turf skating rink, and a children's amusement park. The exhibition also featured the Mogilev FEZ, which already has a number of promising infrastructure projects with the participation of Chinese partners. There was also a presentation of the region's tourism potential. Projects are also planned in the industrial sector. For example, the issue of creating a joint venture to produce skim milk powder is being considered.

By the way, last year the share of China in the foreign trade turnover of the region among countries outside the CIS was 16 percent. Every year, the export of goods to the Celestial Empire increases significantly. While in 2014, organisations in the region exported goods worth just over three million dollars to China, then last year this volume reached over sixty million dollars.

Enterprises of the Gomel Region held their presentation in the format of the Days of Regions. Over the past five years, the region's trade turnover with China has almost tripled, or by \$200 million. The main exports are wood pulp, timber, food, meat, dairy and confectionery products. This year, supplies of canned meat, hot rolling rods and fertilizers began for the first time on the Chinese market. The latter, in June of this year, laid out a route to the Celestial Empire and by rail: 60 containers went to Shaanxi province.

Gomel residents are ready to expand the list of export items further.

The participation of enterprises in the exhibition in Shanghai will help strengthen existing as well as establish new business contacts, will expand the list of products already supplied to the Chinese market, and will generally intensify trade and economic cooperation. During the Year of Regions of Belarus and China, a number of mutual visits took place, during which representatives of the Gomel region were convinced that the demand of Chinese buyers for Belarusian goods was growing. The partners confidently meet each other halfway and develop cooperation in the economic and humanitarian spheres, while strengthening sister-city relations. As a result of the negotiations this year, a number of commercial agreements worth more than \$20 million were signed. Another 85 million dollars is the financial result of the Day of the Gomel Region at the Shanghai exhibition. Six documents were signed, including those on export supplies. An agreement on cooperation to attract investments was concluded by the Gomel-Raton FEZ and One Belt — One Road Sichuan Association for the Promotion of Economic and Trade Cooperation, and as part of the development of interregional cooperation during a meeting with the Deputy Chairman of the People's Government of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Mr. Yang Qin a document of intent was signed to establish sister city relations between the Zhlobin District and the city of Baotou in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. Representatives of the delegation of the Gomel Region held a number of negotiations with foreign partners during the contact and cooperation exchange.



There is mutual interest

So, every year from November 5th to 10th, Shanghai becomes the centre of attention within the framework of the most significant exhibition event in China — China International Import Expo (CIIE). Which is also one of the largest exhibition events in the world. Even despite the period of coronavirus restrictions, last year about three thousand companies from 127 countries took part in the Shanghai exhibition, the number of visitors exceeded 400 thousand people. As already noted, more than 150 countries took part in the event this year.

Today, the exhibition stands of the Belarusian exposition were located in both the country and commercial pavilions of the Shanghai exhibition. For example, the most representative composition of Belarusian exhibitors was gathered at the Food and Agricultural Products commercial pavilion. Food is known to be in great demand in the Chinese market. So, in this pavilion, Belarusian products were represented by more than 30 Belarusian companies, including enterprises that are part of the Belgospischeprom and Brestmyasomolprom concerns. First of all, domestic producers brought to the exhibition in Shanghai dairy products known for their quality: milk powder, new types of cheeses, milk for baby food, cream and frozen curds, condensed milk, including with different flavours, as well as ice cream. Belarusian enterprises have prepared a line of lactose-free dairy products and whole milk products especially for the Chinese market.

Visitors to the exhibition could also appreciate high-quality meat products, including sausages and smoked meats, beef and pork products, and new products from Mogilev and Brest meat processing plants. Sweet lovers were impressed by the variety of confectionery products from Belarus: chocolate, caramel, marmalade and flour delicacies. An assortment of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks was offered. Inside the pavilion, visitors were given master classes on preparing dishes of national Belarusian cuisine from the famous chef Anton Kalenik.

It must be said that the food pavilion of the Shanghai exhibition featured expositions from many countries, including



Azerbaijan, Russia, Singapore, Mexico, Argentina, Romania, South Korea, Georgia, Malaysia, France, Thailand, Serbia and others. Famous world brands demonstrated their products, for example, Nestle, Bayer, Wilmar, PepsiCo and many others. But next to them, Belarusian producers did not get lost at all, they competed on equal terms, and in some places they stood out more favourably.

In turn, in the High-Tech Equipment and Information Technologies pavilion, visitors to the Belarusian stand could get acquainted with scientific and technical achievements and innovative developments in the field of petrochemicals and industry. Domestic petrochemical enterprises showed samples of synthetic yarns, nitrogen fertilizers, industrial chemicals and much more. The industrial potential of Belarus was presented at the exhibition in Shanghai by Planar Scientific and Production Holding of Precision Engineering, Gomselmash OJSC and Byelorussian Steel Works. In addition, the products of Beltopgaz enterprises, which are already well known to Chinese consumers, were presented.

The Consumer Goods pavilion presented visitors with textile and fur products, as well as linen products from Belarusian companies. Particular attention was drawn to the new collection from the leading fur brand of Belarus — GNL, called Silk Road. High-quality fur products produced by the InterProdTrade enterprise of Belkoopsoyuz stood out for their modern design and new technological developments in tailoring and finishing.

For the first time, the Merch of the First brand was introduced to the Chinese market, which brought a collection of sweatshirts with exclusive quotes from the President of the Republic of Belarus in Russian and Chinese.



Exchange, customs, educational and logistics services, developments of domestic educational and scientific institutions, as well as the potential of the country's free economic zones were successfully demonstrated in the Trade in Services pavilion. The traditional joint stand was presented by the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, the State Committee for Science and Technology and the Ministry of Education. They presented innovative developments, including artificial emeralds, technology for microelectronics, graphene-containing material and products based on it, technology for applying composite nanocoatings, heat-resistant materials, and technology for the production of dry bacterial starters. In total, the pavilion presented about 40 scientific and technical developments from institutions and organisations of the Ministry of Education and the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus.

The ability to discover your potential

Throughout the exhibition, a business program accompanied the exhibition. On one of the days of the exhibition, Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan Shahin Mustafayev visited the national stand of Belarus. During the inspection of the exposition, the official delegation noted the consistently high quality of Belarusian products and expressed interest in developing mutually beneficial cooperation. But even on the eve of CIIE, a business forum of representatives of Belarusian and Chinese businesses was held, organised by the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chinese Committee for the Promotion of International Trade of Shanghai. The forum participants were presented with the investment potential of various sectors of the Belarusian



economy, the advantages of doing business in the country and promising joint projects, tools offered by the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange for establishing bilateral business contacts and developing trade relations between Belarus and China, as well as successful examples of interaction between enterprises of the two countries in the food and dairy industries. In addition, the export opportunities of Belarusian companies participating in the forum and national exposition were presented, and business negotiations were held between representatives of the business community.

National logistics operator Beltamozhservice also took part in the 6th China International Import EXPO. “China is the center of world trade, so participation in the largest international exhibition forum in Shanghai is of strategic importance for our company. Since the volume of export-import transportation between Belarus and China is growing, the transport and logistics services of Beltamozhservice, our experience and our own developments are very are in demand. We intend to expand opportunities for cooperation with China and are ready to implement the most ambitious projects for the supply of goods from Belarus to China and from China to Belarus,” emphasised First Deputy General Director of the enterprise Aleksandr Skachkovsky.

At the exhibition in Shanghai, Beltamozhservice presented multimodal transportation on the Belarus — China route, services for the delivery of export-import cargo as part of organised container trains. The transport and logistics infrastructure of the enterprise on the Silk Road route was presented, and information was provided on the full range of logistics and other services. During the exhibition, meetings and negotiations were held with potential clients and partners. It should be noted that Beltamozhservice has been actively developing projects within the framework of the One Belt, One

Road initiative for the transportation of goods by rail as part of organised container trains for the past eight years, being both a consignee and a consignor, a co-operator and a forwarder of container trains. It’s been exactly a year since Beltamozhservice was registered as a resident of Great Stone Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park.

Cooperation becomes a priority

Minister of Economy of Belarus Aleksandr Chervyakov, during business meetings at the China International Import Exhibition in Shanghai, in one of his speeches, focused on the fact that trade and economic cooperation between Belarus and China is on an increasing trajectory of development. He noted that China is our second trading partner. That last year a historical maximum of total trade turnover was reached at almost \$6 billion, and Belarusian exports to the Celestial Empire increased by 77 percent. Over the same year, trade turnover has already approached the \$5 billion mark. According to the Minister of Economy, the core of further investment cooperation between the two countries is a comprehensive strategy for joint industrial development. It includes the creation of new production facilities in mechanical engineering, as well as in the fields of pharmaceuticals and medical technology. In addition, this concerns the production of agricultural and food products using high Chinese technologies and Belarusian competencies, as well as joint developments in these industries. In China, it is necessary to create joint ventures with Belarus, Aleksandr Chervyakov emphasised on the sidelines of the China International Import Exhibition in Shanghai. According to the head of the economic department, Belarus has raw materials that are of interest to Chinese consumers. Therefore, it is important to move more actively and closer to the direct consumer of the product. And for this, cooperation is necessary, it is necessary to create production facilities in China



for processing Belarusian raw materials: cellulose, fertilizers, milk powder, meat products, woodworking products, and so on. Process it into goods with high added value and provide the consumer with a quality product. At the forum in Shanghai, it was decided to launch a similar project. In one of the provinces of China — Liaoning — they will launch ice cream production together with a Slutsk enterprise. And this is just one of the agreements.

When you have something to offer

The national exposition of Belarus at the China International Import Expo was still operating, and Belarusian participants could already boast of tangible successes: over 60 contracts and agreements were concluded for a total amount of more than \$165 million. More than a hundred Belarusian organisations and enterprises taking part in the national exposition of Belarus in Shanghai signed several dozen agreements on various topics on the sidelines of the exhibition, as well as at events within the framework of the exposition. Contracts have been concluded for the supply of food and beverages, metallurgical, petrochemical and pulp and paper products to China, agreements have been reached on cooperation in the field of logistics, scientific development and the placement of new residents in the Great Stone Industrial Park. Most of the documents — worth more than \$130 million — were signed within the framework of the China-Belarus business forum, which was held as part of the national exposition. This event was attended by Deputy Minister of Commerce of the People’s Republic of China Yu Jianhua, Vice-Governor of Gansu Province Zhang Shizhen, members of the Belarusian official delegation, as well as more than two hundred representatives of Chinese and Belarusian business.

Negotiations between Belarusian and Chinese businessmen continued within the framework of a number of thematic

events, including the Forum of Industry Exhibitors of the Republic of Belarus, organized by the Ministry of Commerce of China and the Bank of China. Representatives of more than thirty Belarusian and about one and a half hundred Chinese enterprises took part in this forum. A series of industry seminars dedicated to agricultural and food products, the petrochemical industry, scientific and technical developments, logistics and medical tourism were also successfully held at the national stand of Belarus.

Minister of Economy Aleksandr Chervyakov, summarizing Belarus’ participation in China International Import Expo, focused on the most important. The obvious is that China is a strategic partner for our country. There is a huge market here, good relationships have been established. It is noticeable how actively Belarusian companies are working in the Chinese market. There is considerable interest in their products. And the main thing is that we have something to offer. The exhibition demonstrated the enormous attention of Chinese companies to the Belarusian pavilions. In total, more than 70 domestic enterprises worked at the exhibition. Already this year it is planned to conclude about 30 agreements, which, according to the Minister of Economy, will allow us to see not only tomorrow — to create a serious base for several years ahead from which it will be possible to move further. One of the areas that was actively discussed with partners was cooperation, the creation of joint ventures not only on the territory of the Republic of Belarus, but also here in China. Our country has raw materials that are of interest to Chinese consumers as final processed products. Namely: cellulose, fertilizers, milk powder, meat products, timber — there are quite a lot of areas. Belarus is rich in raw materials. But they need to be processed into goods with high added value. In order to provide the consumer with the highest quality product.

Aleksey Fedosov

A BOLD DECISION AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

The country's production of its own passenger cars is comparable in importance to the implementation of space projects and the construction of nuclear power plants. The beginning of a new branch of mechanical engineering was laid in 2015 at a meeting with the Head of State. Needless to say, many were sceptical about this idea back then. They say that all roles in the global auto industry are distributed, the leaders are known, the markets are divided and it is no longer realistic to win your place under the sun. But Aleksandr Lukashenko's confidence and perseverance prevailed. As a result, on November 17th, 2017, the first production Geely Atlas NL3 rolled off the assembly line of the BELGEE plant in the presence of the President.

Of course, the Head of State also realised that creating your own production, as they say, from scratch, is risky: competitors were far ahead. But you can cooperate with manufacturers who already have extensive experience in this area. As a result, the decision was strategic and pragmatic: to identify a partner who would help, based on Belarusian and own technologies, to organise the production of passenger cars accessible to the population. At a meeting in 2015, the President expressed confidence, "We made a decision — we will have a passenger car, and we will create it together with the Chinese based on their technologies. This does not mean that we will simply copy one to one and produce a similar car. Where we can (and we can, we have experience in the assembly and production of trucks and components for passenger cars), we must use our own experience and our own developments. They are in the National Academy of Sciences, and in applied science as well."

Strategic significance of the investment project

Belarusians and Chinese worked, as they say, hand in hand. \$318 million of investment was allocated to create the plant and its infrastructure. The President instructed to reduce costs as much as possible, and the Government was tasked with monitoring the prospects for the development of the project, assessing the market situation and the production plan for new models. At the same meeting in 2015, Aleksandr Lukashenko noted, "Of course, we will force the team to make the highest quality cars, given that there is production, service, and the government is still demanding in the country, the car will be good. But there are even better cars, albeit at a higher price. And here's what the population will do: buy our car or, perhaps, they will give preference to an expensive, but already well-known brand. So the first issue is a market one." The Head of State personally controlled the progress of the implementation of the most important investment project and was aware of all events. In rather difficult conditions, the Government developed a decree on the production of passenger cars, because at that time there were about 30 assembly plants operating in Russia alone. And with such fierce competition, it was necessary to think about how to reduce costs in order to ensure the proper level of salaries and

tax revenues to the budget. In addition, we could not forget about the interest of the Chinese side.

Nevertheless, despite all the difficulties, the strategic significance of the new knowledge-intensive project for the economy was obvious. At the fifth All-Belarusian People's Congress in 2016, Aleksandr Lukashenko stated that the development of domestic mechanical engineering and machine tools would become of great importance, "Without it, we will be forced to continue to predominantly purchase foreign means of production, and therefore depend on such imports."

At the same time, it was said that in the transport engineering industry, investment resources with state support would be concentrated on large breakthrough projects, such as organising the production of Geely passenger cars, creating capacities and expanding the production of BELAZ mining dump trucks, modernising the production of Minsk Automobile Plant, and automotive components.

To make the car accessible

The new plant grew between Borisov and Zhodino, occupied an area of 118 hectares and employed more than 1,300 people. The production capacity of the enterprise is up to 60 thousand cars per year with the possibility of further increase. However, the launch of the assembly line meant only the very first stage in the history of the production of Belarusian passenger cars. After all, no matter how difficult it is to release a worthy product to the market, selling it is even more difficult. At the grand opening ceremony of the enterprise, Aleksandr Lukashenko, addressing the employees of the BELGEE plant, noted that the best advertisement for new cars and an indicator of their quality would be that the plant workers themselves would switch to these cars, "Besides me, your management, together with representatives of the PRC will think about how to encourage members of the workforce to travel in this car. When you produce this car, get in it and drive around, it will be the biggest advertisement."

To increase the availability of cars, various options were developed: credit facilities with deferred payment were opened, and leasing programmes appeared. It was a matter of honour and protection of national interests that the President decided to vertically ban all civil officers from buying imported cars — every official, from a deputy to the heads of



district administrations, must use domestic transport. General Director of BELGEE Gennady Svidersky noted that people are already accustomed to the best conditions for selling a domestic car: there are credit and leasing programs for which interest rates are lower than the refinancing rate of the National Bank. This practice, by the way, is used in all countries. In Russia, for example, when buying a domestic car, individuals are always given incentives, because when selling, 20 percent of the VAT on the cost of this car goes to the budget. The more individuals buy domestic cars, the more the budget is replenished.

Achieve engineering competencies

With the start of sales, the issue arose with organising vehicle maintenance at the proper level. The President instructed to develop a network of service stations throughout the country so that everyone who buys a new car has the opportunity to freely undergo maintenance and, if necessary, carry out high-quality repairs. The need to create its own design bureau at the enterprise, with the help of which it can strive for technological independence in the field of production, was not lost on us, “Now we have received help from specialists who came from other countries. But you need to have your own people. At the first stage, we need to have 10—13 people who will contact our designers from Minsk Automobile Plant, BELAZ and will slowly accumulate experience so that we can develop the design and create cars ourselves from scratch.”

Gennady Svidersky also noted that at the Institute of the National Academy of Sciences there is a team working on passenger cars. It is there that a think tank is being created that will allow achieving engineering competencies in this industry. He also spoke about the development of service centres. There are more than 30 of them in the country today.

New status and new content

Geely is one of the most significant and illustrative examples of mutually beneficial cooperation between Belarus and China. And he became truly friendly thanks to the long-standing and trusting relationship between the President of the country and the Chairman of the People's Republic of China. This is exactly what, by the way, Xi Jinping spoke about during his meeting with Aleksandr Lukashenko in China in March of this year, “A meeting between old friends is always a joy. We met for the last time last year in September in Samarkand. We had a wonderful conversation, during which we announced that Chinese-Belarusian relations would be elevated to the level of an all-weather and comprehensive strategic partnership, which served as a powerful impetus for full-scale cooperation between the two countries. The new status of bilateral relations must be filled with new content.” The idea of a new content for the relationship began to come true. During Aleksandr Lukashenko's March visit to China, another project was approved — the creation of a joint production in Belarus with specialists from the Chinese automobile corporation FAW. This idea was also supported by Xi Jinping, and the company itself is considered the



founder of the Chinese automobile industry. During the visit, the President of Belarus called for developing bilateral cooperation in this area, “You know our interest in you. You make good cars. I would like us to create a real car in Belarus together with you. And if we want to get effect and success, this must be done now and very quickly, when territories and markets are freed up for our future products.”

The car is becoming more and more Belarusian

Ten million cars sold worldwide... In 2020, Geely became the first Chinese car brand to achieve such a record. And by the end of April last year, cumulative global sales exceeded 12 million units. And the Belarusian plant became part of this global brand. In Belarus today people are lining up to buy Geely cars, which have become truly popular, and an agreement on licensed production has emerged with Chinese partners. That is, in the future, Belarus will have a completely domestic car.

The new plant gave jobs and salaries not only to Borisov, but also gave work to subcontractors, making the car more and more Belarusian.

Moreover, the company began producing cars under its own brand BelGee X50. Previously, this model was produced by the plant under the Geely Coolray brand. In the near future there are also plans to produce two more models under the domestic name. According to Gennady Svidersky, your own brand opens up the right of access to documentation and the opportunity to independently regulate all processes and determine the terms of sale. All global firms are following this path.

Take advantage of a unique situation

The general director of the enterprise notes that there are always requests for cars. But you need to understand that a passenger car is a product of many enterprises. When planning production and supplies, they base it on demand. Last year, 4,300 new cars were sold in the domestic market.



This year they expected to sell 20 percent more and ordered 6 thousand sets for sale in Belarus. But demand significantly exceeded supply, and in just seven months of this year, 8 thousand cars were sold — twice as many as in 2022. Now the plans have been adjusted, and the company plans to sell 13 thousand cars — three times more than last year.

In order to fulfil the task of increasing production volumes, the enterprise works 12 hours a day, seven days a week. An additional recruitment was even announced. Today, a unique situation has developed in the automotive market. Western companies have left, and domestic cars are sold, as they say, straight from the assembly line; there are even queues at car dealerships. But we must understand that the volume of machine production cannot be increased instantly — this is a gradual process. The supply chains disrupted as a result of the sanctions are also having an impact, and a reset has been made in this regard. Capacities for transshipment of goods through Vladivostok, Kazakhstan, and St. Petersburg have not yet been fully developed, but the BELGEE enterprise uses all available channels, which it mastered this and last years.

“We have a solid programme”

The presence of scientific, personnel and industrial potential in the field of mechanical engineering provides the prerequisites for the production in Belarus of most components for the production of passenger cars. The President pays special attention to localization. During a visit to the Minsk National Airport in August of this year, Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised that the country will have its own Belarusian car, “Since we are already hooked on this, we will reach the point of producing our own absolutely, almost 100 percent Belarusian car. A quality car.”

The President continued the topic of localization at a meeting with the country's youth activists in October, “We need to get our parts for this car. We have everything for this. Some enterprises are underutilised. Yes, it is not an easy task to produce your own engine and gearbox for a passenger car.

President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko, “Our friends (from China) responded to my request and helped create this wonderful plant. Moreover, they also provided loans. Therefore, first of all, I want to say today that my dream of making my own passenger car has come true. We created our own car and wrote another bright page in the history of our country.”

(At the grand opening of the new plant of Belgee, November 17th, 2017)

But we have a motor plant — let it produce, let it move. We make boxes and engines for other cars. Yes, this is more delicate work, but we will do it.”

The next year will not be easy for BELGEE. It is necessary to create a stamping production in a short period of time and begin production of all body components. Aleksandr Lukashenko spoke about this at a meeting with young people, “We will build an additional body stamping workshop. We agreed with the Chinese in this regard. If we need equipment, they will help us. And we will slowly go out in our car. We have a solid programme: we must provide our people with their own car. Whatever the imported car is, it is an imported one. What happened — spare parts and so on, but this is ours. It needs to be ours. And we are moving towards having our own.”

On the list of national treasures

So, the Belarusian automobile industry has turned a new page, mastering the production of passenger cars that have already earned the trust of car enthusiasts. We can safely say: BELGEE has passed the test for price-quality ratio, which is confirmed by sales in car dealerships. And the sanctions policy directed against the country stimulated the development of import substitution to increase the level of localization of the production of Belarusian cars.

Meanwhile, the creation of joint production facilities not only with China, but also with Russia, India, and Iran, which have extensive experience in this area and a powerful industrial base, can be considered promising. A very important point is to carefully study the market and determine which models will be in greatest demand. This is precisely the success of further sales of products in the domestic and foreign markets. ... Trucks, mining dump trucks and tractors ‘Made in Belarus’ have already become a national treasure, and these products are now recognised in all corners of the world. Belarusian electric buses have no problems finding their place in the domestic and foreign markets. Now we can say that we have our own passenger car industry. Six years ago, on November 17th, 2017, Aleksandr Lukashenko took part in the grand opening of the new plant of BELGEE. The domestic passenger car industry began and successfully continues its history.

Aleksei Pimenov

INTERNET THAT BRINGS BENEFITS

The Belarus IGF Internet Governance Forum took place in Minsk. The main aspects and current problems of the development of the global network were discussed by representatives of the state, business, non-profit organisations, technical and academic communities.

The forum brought together hundreds of participants from near and far abroad in the Belarusian capital. Its programme included discussions on digital literacy and inclusion, cybercrime and personal data protection. Forum participants were united by the fact that they care what the Internet will be like tomorrow, as well as how to confront problems and challenges on the Internet on a national, regional and global scale. The event returned to Minsk after a three-year break.

A platform for exchanging ideas

Speaking with a welcoming speech to the forum participants, Deputy Head of the Operational Analytical Centre under the President of the Republic of Belarus Sergei Zhernosek noted that the Internet in Belarus has long ceased to be just a tool for searching and exchanging information, but has turned into an environment for information exchange of any type of data, an integral part of the global infrastructure of the economy, production, business processes, culture and education, communication and the daily life of each of us. At the same time, the Internet, according to Sergei Zhernosek, has become a source of threats. And it is used by attackers to commit illegal actions, such as phishing,

vishing, cyber-attacks on information infrastructure, and is also used by individual states to wage information wars in order to form the public opinion they need. Based on this, it is the topic of security, including those related to the noticeable development in the field of artificial intelligence and neural networks, that is now actively being raised in the world: from the global digital treaty initiated by the UN to the constantly changing legislation in the field of cybersecurity in countries.

Sergei Zhernosek recalled that the forum is invariably held with the direct participation and support of the Operational Analytical Centre under the President of the Republic of Belarus, a regulator in the field of information and communication technologies, which also coordinates state cybersecurity activities in the national segment of the Internet, and also carries out international cooperation on issues countering cyber threats. As the administrator of the national domain zone 'by/bel', the Operational Analytical Centre actively interacts with all registrars and relies on the principle of dialogue when improving and developing legislation on the registration of domain names in the national domain zone. The centre interacts, among other things, with other participants in the state and the business

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community on issues of technical information protection and cybersecurity. By the way, next year the 'by' domain zone will turn 30 years old. Sergei Zhernosek called for using the Belarus IGF forum as a platform for the exchange of ideas, experience, as well as for cooperation between various participants in the Internet community. Only together, emphasised the Deputy Head of the Operational Analytical Centre under the President of the Republic of Belarus, can we make the World Wide Web a blessing and not a threat, a driver of development and not an instrument of discrimination, a source of knowledge and not misinformation.

Issues require government attention

In turn, First Deputy Minister of Information Andrei Kuntsevich noted that issues related to digitalization require close government attention, prompt decision-making and protection of the interests of citizens and the country as a whole. The Ministry of Information, as a regulatory body in the field of mass media, is taking improvement measures in terms of establishing norms and rules for the functioning of the Internet and media. Andrei Kuntsevich recalled that literally in October of this year a new version of the Law 'On the Mass Media' came into force. One of the points was the determination of the legal status of online news aggregators, as well as the procedure for the functioning of such resources.

Andrei Kuntsevich assessed that in general, over the past three years, the law on the media has undergone a number of serious changes in terms of legal regulation of the activities of the Internet sphere and the expansion of the powers of the Ministry of Information. Today, the Ministry, in cooperation with interested authorities, carries out an important task in the field of information security, aimed at identifying and preventing the spread of destructive, extremist and other information on the Internet that is harmful in nature. Moreover, this is not Belarusian know-how, emphasized Andrei Kuntsevich, no matter how anyone tries to accuse us of being undemocratic for this. This practice has become widespread in many European countries, which once again confirms the thesis that where we are talking about ensuring the security of the state and protecting the legitimate interests of citizens, restrictions and prohibitions are in order.

Challenges set new tasks

In turn, First Deputy Minister of Communications and Information Pavel Tkach drew attention to the fact that the number of users of wireless broadband Internet access in Belarus already exceeds the country's population. Moreover, Belarus occupies one of the leading places in Europe in terms of penetration of fibre-optic networks into households. The number of users of wireless broadband Internet access, that is, people who use a cell phone to access the Internet, already exceeds the population of Belarus. This means that a number of citizens already have more than one

SIM card with which they access the Internet. There is an upward trend in traffic consumption. For example, over the past five years, traffic consumption has increased tenfold. This is a serious burden on our networks, Pavel Tkach emphasised.

In a word, new challenges pose the task for government agencies to increase the level of cybersecurity. Cyberbullying, for example, requires serious attention; it is a separate area that brings certain problems, noted Pavel Tkach. Another problem is the vulnerability and insecurity of personal data. Despite progress in the field of cybersecurity, cases of data leaks and hacker attacks are increasingly occurring, which creates certain risks for citizens. The need to improve data protection has become one of the main challenges of the Internet in this era. He also emphasised that the Internet should be secure, accessible, transparent and confidential.

The concept remains the same

So, the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) was held in Minsk for the fifth time. This large-scale event is not a 'closed club'. Its idea is to be a truly open platform for discussing issues related to the existence and governance of the Internet in

As reported at the forum, the Future Summit will be held in September 2024 under the auspices of the UN. It is planned to sign a global digital agreement, aimed, among other things, at preventing a total split of the Internet. Whatever the situation with the defragmentation of the Internet, the world has already experienced the influence of misinformation, which is literally crammed throughout the entire Internet.

Belarus and around the world. This was the original concept of the forum, and it remains unchanged. It should also be noted that Belarus IGF is part of a global initiative. In 2006, the UN Secretary General announced the creation of the Internet Governance Forum.

Agenda reflects development

The idea of the Belarus IGF remains the same, but the same cannot be said about the event program. Every year it becomes not only more intense, it changes and becomes more complex. According to the general opinion of forum participants, this indicates the development of the Internet itself.

In addition to the global task of the forum — determining how and in what direction the Internet will develop — this year's Belarus IGF also discussed issues of personal data protection and cybersecurity, problems of digital literacy, the existence of artificial intelligence and the formation of a false agenda in the media, social networks and Internet resources.

Yes, representatives of the Operational Analytical Centre under the President of Belarus, the National Centre for Cyber Security and Cyber Incident Response, the Ministry



of Information and the Ministry of Communications took direct part in the work of the Internet Governance Forum. In addition to Belarusian Internet experts, the event was also attended by representatives of international companies directly related to the Internet: the Coordination Centre for Domains ‘RU/.PФ’, the Corporation for the Management of Domain Names and IP Addresses (ICANN), the Coordination Centre for Network Resource Distribution Internet in the European Region (RIPE NCC).

You can’t leave it unattended

Participants of Belarus IGF 2023 were unanimous that the Internet has become not only the most important part of world politics, economics and social life, but also a source of new threats. And without proper regulation of this area, total chaos will arise, which will only be welcomed by criminals. What this regulation should be like is another matter — the question remains open within individual countries and at the supranational level. Of course, it is simply impossible to control the operation of such a complex ‘mechanism’ as the Internet without the participation of the state. No reasonable government will allow itself to withdraw from this sphere, because as a result the entire society will instantly suffer. For example, the Belarusian National Centre for Personal Data Protection over the two years of its operation has deleted over 22 million records with illegally obtained and distributed personal data of residents of Belarus. Of these, there are 1.7 million unique records, more than 220 thousand records of personal data of minors and more than 5 thousand records of students. At the same time, the centre found that companies in the retail sector leak the most information. On a global scale, where the Internet also already rules everything, including through the digital economy, governments of different countries are trying to develop a common set of rules to regulate it. Perhaps the so-called Concept of the UN Safer Internet Convention will take the form of a legally significant international agreement very soon. If most countries sign this convention, the Internet

can become more civilized and harmless. By the way, Russia is also developing the concept. Thus, in 2017, the project was presented for consideration at a meeting of the ministers of communications and telecommunications of the BRICS countries.

Place in the world of the Internet

The issue of quantity has always been important for such a global network as the Internet. If we talk about Belarus, then as of the beginning of 2023, there were more than 8 million Internet users in our country. Such data are presented in the international report Digital 2023: Belarus. As a result, Internet penetration (the ratio of the number of Internet users to the total population) was almost 86.9%, an increase from last year. For comparison: Internet penetration in Russia is 88.2%, Kazakhstan — 90.9%, Poland — 88.4%, Lithuania — 88.9%, Latvia — 92.4%, Ukraine — 79.2%. Representatives of government agencies who participated in the work of Belarus IGF 2023 confirmed that they will cope with the task set by the Head of State to provide broadband Internet access in rural areas until 2025. Of course, this will further expand the audience of Internet users in Belarus, and therefore increase and increase Internet penetration. Participants in the Minsk Internet Governance Forum also emphasized the need to improve the quality of the Internet within individual states/regions and throughout the world. At the same time, the quality of the Internet does not at all come down to its speed alone (by the way, on the eve of the forum it became known that the operation of a fibre-optic Internet cable with the world’s highest data transfer speed of 1.2 terabits per second began in China). And it depends on many things, starting from the quality of communications and ending with the quality of network/software equipment.

Given the strong influence of information

Experts and participants of Belarus IGF 2023 agree with the formula: ‘One World — One Internet’, which they openly stated. However, we live in amazing times, and now voices are increasingly being heard that the world, or more precisely, the Internet, is in danger of fragmentation. It’s scary to even google this topic, because if such a scenario with the Internet comes true, the whole world faces not just the emergence of ‘appanage principalities’ (each with its own Internet), but a real general catastrophe. As reported at the forum, the Future Summit will be held in September 2024 under the auspices of the UN. It is planned to sign a global digital agreement, aimed, among other things, at preventing a total split of the Internet. Whatever the situation with the defragmentation of the Internet, the world has already experienced the influence of misinformation, which is literally crammed throughout the entire Internet. Today, information is not just accessible — it directly affects the lives of people, society, economies of regions, states and the whole world. False messages can bring down stock indices, change markets, behaviour and habits of people.



The bulk of data is consumed through digital channels, where the possibilities for spreading misinformation are endless. As well as ways of interpreting it. This topic was discussed at one of the plenary sessions of Belarus IGF-2023 entitled *How a False Agenda Is Formed in The Media, Social Networks and Internet Resources*. Representatives of the journalistic and scientific community spoke a lot here, including about how to combat fake news and counter their spread. According to Pavel Tukhto, editor-in-chief of the Tochka.by portal, in the current situation, it is best for consumers of news content to read authoritative sites and think for themselves. Of course, readers also need to collate information from multiple news sources. Leading specialist of the editorial office of BelTA multimedia projects, Antonina Bolobolova, drew attention to this. The agency representative also added that Internet users need to check even the address of the site where they came to read the news and its domain zone. After all, today it costs attackers nothing to create a false page for both a bank and an information portal.

Bynet round anniversary

Next year, Bynet will celebrate 30 years of its existence. In May 1994, an administrator of the national domain zone BY appeared in our country. Thanks to this, Belarusian sites ending in .by became possible. In 1995—1996, the first Belarusian pages began to appear on the Internet. Next year will also mark the 10th anniversary of the launch of the ‘BEL’ zone. It was launched by hoster.by. Today this zone is the second Cyrillic domain in the world in terms of the number of registered names.

Young people are interested in this

Meanwhile, the youth forum on Internet governance YOUTH IGF, which is part of the large-scale Belarus IGF forum, was held at the Belarusian State University of

Informatics and Radioelectronics. Participants in the youth section also discussed current Internet problems. At the forum, General Director of hoster.by Sergey Povalishev and Director of the Coordination Centre for .RU/.RF Domains Andrey Vorobyov delivered welcoming remarks. ICANN Senior Manager for Eastern Europe and Central Asia Mikhail Anisimov spoke on the topic *The Domain Name System: How the DNS Works and How Relations Between Countries are Built*. RIPE NCC External Relations Director for Central Asia and the Caucasus Vaan Hovsepyan spoke on the topic *RIPE NCC Development Programmes for the Technical Community*.

On a global scale, where the Internet also already rules everything, including through the digital economy, governments of different countries are trying to develop a common set of rules to regulate it. Perhaps the so-called Concept of the UN Safer Internet Convention will take the form of a legally significant international agreement very soon. If most countries sign this convention, the Internet can become more civilized and harmless.

YOUTH IGF BELARUS is part of the Belarus IGF Internet Governance Forum, which annually brings together participants from all over the world. Such forums have been held since 2006 in different countries under the auspices of the UN. In Belarus, IGF is traditionally organised by hoster.by — the largest registrar of .BY and .BEL domains, a cloud hosting provider, and an expert in the field of information security. Official partners of the forum are ICANN, RIPE NCC, Ministry of Communications and Information, Ministry of Information, Belarusian Cloud Technologies LLC (beCloud). The forum is held with the support of the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics.

Vsevolod Yevseyev



Healthy. Tasty. Beautiful and affordable.

With such meanings and under various brands, Belarusian manufacturers promote their products to the world market. What surprised them this time, what they presented at the 29th international specialised exhibition and fair Prodexpo 2023, which was held in Minsk – we'll tell you about this and much more.



As you know, this exhibition is traditionally one of the flagship projects of exhibition and fair activities in Belarus. It introduces advanced production technologies in the food industry, promotes new brands, fills the domestic food market with quality food and beverages, and promotes international cooperation and exchange of experience from leading manufacturers. By the way, in 2022 it was awarded the Sign of the Russian Union of Exhibitions and Fairs for the high professional level of the organisation, its special significance for the economy of the region and the expansion of foreign economic relations. The organisers and partners of the exhibition-fair this year are the state enterprise BelExpo, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Belarus, the Belgospischeprom Concern, the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Belkoopsoyuz. According to tradition, *Prodexpo 2023* was held on November 14th—17th at the Football Arena. Once again it was possible to be convinced: this is a convenient platform for communication between industry professionals and making current business decisions, high-quality professional networking, demonstration of capabilities and products for the target business audience, as well as presentation of the latest innovations. By the way, the key to the popularity of the Minsk

exhibition is a well-prepared, multifaceted business program that is attractive to managers of enterprises in the food industry and related industries, domestic and foreign delegations, and the media. During multi-format meetings, problems and prospects for the development of the food industry market were discussed, negotiations were organised between retailers, suppliers and manufacturers. In addition, the following were successfully held: the international symposium of bakers, the republican review of the quality of bakery and confectionery products *Smakata-2023*, the professional skill competition of confectioners *High Fashion in Confectionery Art*, the International Culinary Cup 2023, the

international competition for the best packaging *SmakArt*, and also tasting competitions, master classes and much more.

Where we are respected and expected

The opening of the exhibition began at noon with the symbolic dance composition *Limitless Belarus*. This name, according to the presenter, correlates with a huge range of goods for every taste. And there really were a great many of them. The exhibition can be called limitless also because this assortment increases from year to year. As, indeed, is the number of exhibitors. More than 130 participants from five countries arrived at *Prodexpo*

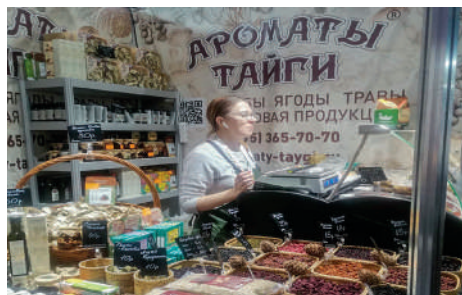


■ “I am very glad that the exhibition opened on the eve of a professional holiday — the Day of Workers of Agriculture and Processing Industry of the Agro-Industrial Complex,” Deputy Minister of Agriculture Vladimir Grakun, who soon recovered to inspect the exhibition, told reporters.
■ During the press trip, Oleg Zhidkov, Chairman of the Belarusian State Concern, also spoke with media representatives

PRODEXPO-2023



■ No matter what booth you visited, you could see interesting new products from the food industry everywhere, both domestic and from foreign guests



2023 this year: companies, holdings and enterprises from Belarus, Russia, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Turkmenistan. According to tradition, visitors greeted the arriving representatives of delegations, diplomatic missions of foreign states and honoured guests with applause. The audience was greeted by Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food Vladimir Grakun, Chairman of the Belgospisheprom concern Oleg Zhidkov, First Deputy Chairwoman of the Minsk City Executive Committee Nadezhda Lazarevich and First Deputy Chairman of the Board of the Belarusian Republican Union of Consumer Societies (Belkoopsoyuz) Aleksandr Skrundevsky. "I am very glad that the exhibition opened on the eve of the professional holiday - the Day of Agricultural and

Processing Industry Workers of the Agro-Industrial Complex," said Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food Vladimir Grakun. "And our villagers have something to be proud of." Today we will see their products on stands. Despite difficult 'weather conditions' in the world, Belarus supplies it to more than 100 countries. The products are recognisable and, most importantly, desirable, in demand both in Russian regions and in other friendly countries. I hope that during the exhibition Belarusian enterprises will conclude profitable contracts for the supply of products." Vladimir Vladimirovich wished everyone fruitful work, successful conclusion of contracts, and also expressed hope that the products of foreign companies will take their rightful place on domestic shelves, just as Belarusian products will take their rightful place on the shelves in different countries.

First Deputy Chairman of the Minsk City Executive Committee Nadezhda Lazarevich expressed confidence that all the products presented at the exhibition will be in great demand, because *Prodexpo* is visited annually by citizens and guests. "We are glad that the exhibition is being held in the capital of Belarus. Our guests from friendly countries will greatly enjoy interacting with our consumers, and we will be happy to try their products." The opening ceremony of the exhibition also ended symbolically: with the sowing of grain into the soil, into the *Canvas of Life* — a fabric stretched at the edge of the proscenium, symbolising fertile soil framed by golden ears of wheat. Since ancient times, grain has been considered

a symbol of life, fertility, wealth, and in relation to the exhibition — a symbol of successful business relations between people. The seed was 'sown' by Vladimir Grakun, Nadezhda Lazarevich, Oleg Zhidkov and Aleksandr Skrundevsky. During the press approach, Vladimir Grakun and Oleg Zhidkov spoke with journalists. "The export of Belarusian food and agricultural raw materials at the end of the year will not be less than the previous level," assured Vladimir Grakun. And in the past, he recalled, such exports in monetary terms amounted to \$8.3 billion. "I think we will consolidate this figure and even increase it a little." According to the deputy minister, the markets to which Belarusian products are supplied remain stable and are becoming more numerous. He noted, not without pleasure, the quality of our products, thanks to which they will always be in demand. "Now two of our delegations are in friendly countries and are working on issues of supplying Belarusian food. And the quality of our products is known all over the world, this is a Belarusian brand. So, despite the sanctions, our products will always be in demand in the world," emphasised Vladimir Grakun.

He named Russia and other CIS countries as his main supply partners. "At the same time, we supply products to Serbia and Moldova. We are working on cooperation with African countries — the most remote in the geography of supplies. We work with China, and the volumes of products supplied there are constantly increasing." At the end of the interview, Vladimir Grakun said, "We have something to sell.

But first of all, we will provide for our population and sell the surplus. The range of products for export is large. This year alone the growth in milk production is 106 percent."

The Belgospisheprom concern produced \$425 million worth of import-substituting products in the nine months of 2023. This is one of the flagships among the country's food industry enterprises: it produces a wide range of goods, including sugar and salt in large volumes. Chairman of the board of the concern Oleg Zhidkov spoke about this. "Today the concern is an import-oriented production aimed at maximizing the replacement of imported products that we are accustomed to seeing on our shelves. We are increasing the volume of such products, thereby reducing the foreign exchange burden on the country's economy and saturating our market with familiar products." The concern supplies the bulk of its products to the domestic market, ensuring the country's national food security. "And what is produced in excess of these needs, we are ready to export, share with all countries who are interested in cooperation with us, and even where we may not be particularly welcome today. We are quietly making our way there so that consumers in these countries have the opportunity to try the best samples of the products we produce."

According to Oleg Zhidkov, the concern's enterprises today cover the salt needs of a quarter of the Russian market. This year it is planned to supply 170 thousand tons of sugar to Russia: four times more than last year. When asked which countries would be profitable to sell our products to, the chairman of the concern replied, "In addition to Russia, there is active development in the direction of China. These are the markets in which we establish ourselves as a partner, and not just a one-time supplier. We also discover Guinea, Vietnam, African countries such as Zimbabwe and Egypt. All this makes it possible to plan exports strategically for the next five years." Oleg Zhidkov also answered questions related to the modernisation of enterprises, which, according to him, is actively underway. He also spoke about the contribution of academic science, about how scientists from the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus are involved in a number of projects that are already being implemented, how new technologies and recipes are being developed, and that without science it is impossible to imagine modern production.

Representatives of the VIP group that opened the exhibition got acquainted with the exposition,

and tasted products at some stands. At the stand of the Scientific and Practical Centre for Animal Husbandry of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, for example, milk aroused interest. Three types of it were presented: from the Belarusian Holsteins, the red Danish breed of cows and a cross between both, which was bred recently. So, milk from mixed cows, as we were told, is suitable for people with milk protein intolerance. Moreover, it is already produced on an industrial basis by one of the enterprises.

However, no matter what booth you visited, you could see interesting new products from the food industry everywhere at the exhibition. I think the specialists of the Pinsk meat processing plant managed to surprise the VIP guests: in addition to pork and beef, they added hard cheese to the new dry-cured product. And the enterprising people of the Slutsk Meat Processing Plant, which works with more than 20 countries, also know how to surprise. Khinkali: although this product is similar to traditional dumplings, its production is complex and expensive, they said at the company's booth. And yet frozen khinkali, a Georgian dish made in Slutsk, will be supplied to Georgia! Manufacturers are confident that the quality will be appreciated there. As they say, risk is a noble cause. And the meat processing plant will expand its geography of supplies.

Import substitution, as already noted, is a strategic direction in the context of Western sanctions. On our shelves we already have Grodno jamon, Minsk Roquefort, and even Fanipol black caviar. And everything is of high quality.

Smakata bakery

Many new products were presented at the stand of the *Smakata 2023* bakery product review and competition. We noticed trifle cakes from the Soligorsk Bakery in original transparent packaging. The bread *Maladzechanski Padarunak* also evokes admiration: a huge loaf weighing two and a half kilograms. We tasted black bread with sesame seeds, which is baked in Orsha. And bakers from Polyssia David-Gorodok add canned sprouted wheat grain to the dough. Tasty and healthy!

We also tried bread, the preparation of which is minimally simplified. This was invented by specialists from the Baranovichkhleboprodukt enterprise, and they already produce flour from which housewives can bake bread even in a frying pan. We simply add water according to the recipe to the Baranovich miracle flour, knead, then the dough 'rests' for another 40



minutes on the stove — and bakes for the same amount of time. I tried it and the bread is very pleasant. And I watched it bake, lingering at the booth. I also bought a couple of bags of Pekushek flour! As soon as I write this article, I'll definitely do some bread magic. By the way, the International Symposium of Bakers was also held as part of the exhibition. Which is quite logical: after all, bread, as we say, is the head of everything.

Have you ever tried northern tea? Well, try it!

Many unique products were brought to Minsk from other countries. For example,

The bright colours of the packaging of teas from the Krasnodar Region also attracted attention. There, at the Azerchay booth, teas were brewed in transparent teapots: black, green, and with additives. Boiling water was added directly from a huge samovar. If you want, try it, and if you like it, you can buy it. Yes, this tea corner came in handy for everyone. After all, the breaks between the presentations of national dishes from Pakistan, India, Uzbekistan, Armenia and Vietnam, which took place right on the main stage of the Football Arena near the tea booth, were short. Therefore, for gourmets (including me...), savouring the exotic



■ The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Sajjad Haider Khan, spoke at the presentation of the cuisine Culinary Traditions of Pakistan. Indian cuisine was presented by the Head of the Indian Cultural Center in Minsk, Mr. Karan and his wife Olga

at the Made in Yamal booth there were canned venison stews and sprats made from Arctic fish: vendace and smelt. And the Russian company Taiga Aromas offered products from Altai and the Far East. Pine nuts were in demand. There was a brisk trade in herbal teas that came from the Russian North, from the Tyumen Region. They are based on fermented fireweed tea, which is produced at the First Yamal Tea Manufactory. Leaves and berries of lingonberries, cloudberries, blueberries, rowan berries, apple blossoms... And this is not a complete list of additives for various tea blends. After tasting the tea, I couldn't resist and bought several packages, very attractive in design, and which, by the way, later participated in a packaging masters competition.

food from these five countries, a glass of hot aromatic tea served as a wonderful aid for assimilation of dishes. And the rhythm of the tastings was very intense: every 30 minutes there were new taste experiences. That's what we'll talk about...

All cuisines visit us Pakistan

The first to surprise us were the guests from Pakistan. The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Sajjad Haider Khan spoke at the presentation *Culinary Traditions of Pakistan*. He thanked everyone who showed interest in the event. "I am very glad," said Mr. Ambassador, "to introduce you to the tastes of my homeland, to bring them



to the heart of Minsk. Pakistan's culinary heritage is as rich as our culture, nature and people. Pakistani cuisine is a reflection of our history, traditions and the hospitality that characterises our nation. In addition to spices and ingredients, it also tells about history. Moreover, this is a story about unity and diversity, about the harmonious fusion of different cultures — a clear indication of how important it is to share with each other, and not only food..."

Mr. Ambassador emphasised the importance of sharing cultural experiences between countries through the universal language of food. He introduced the chef, who prepared several dishes for the guests of the exhibition, and wished everyone a pleasant appetite and a wonderful day. We watched a film about Pakistan and its cuisine. A captivating cuisine presentation covering various aspects of Pakistan's rich culinary heritage was expertly conducted by the presenter. From her we learned about the wide range of tastes, the techniques for preparing different dishes that make this cuisine famous for its taste and variety. What do Pakistanis eat for breakfast, lunch and dinner? What tea and drinks do you prefer? How interesting it was to learn about the different spices that are called the heart and soul of Pakistani dishes! And they also add fresh herbs: mint and cilantro. By the way, many dishes are based on rice and wheat that are familiar to us. And, of course, meat, cooked in different forms. And Pakistani street food is also, I have no doubt, very tasty. We watched a video master class on how to prepare pilaf with lamb, a favourite Pakistani dish called biryani — which we later tried.

An English proverb says: to understand the taste of pudding, you have to eat it. After violinist Nina Pruzhanovskaya delighted the festival guests with her performance of Pakistani melodies, we began the tasting. All of this was actually very tasty. And even a lot: there was enough food for everyone. In Pakistan, it was said at the presentation, when welcoming guests, it is customary to prepare many dishes that make the family proud. These included biryani, as well as desserts that were prepared for the guests of *Prodexpo 2023*.

India

Distant India was represented at the exhibition by the head of the Indian

Cultural Centre in Minsk, Karan and his wife Olga, who, according to them, were united by their love for India in 2012. And in 2017, the love for this colourful country and for each other inspired us to open 'little India' in Minsk. In the Belarusian capital, Indian cuisine is known and loved: there are five Indian restaurants here, and several Indian shops at the Komarovskiy market, which is popular among Minsk residents. And when the presentation *Tastes and Aromas of Vibrant Indian Cuisine* took place, many came to drink masala tea with sweets. Karan was preparing tea, and meanwhile Olga was talking fascinatingly about the features of the cuisine, with interesting photo and video content about spices and various dishes. For those who do not know: in India, food is considered sacred; it is one of the ancient traditions of the people. In addition, as I learned not so long ago, according to Ayurveda, food is considered alive only four hours after preparation, or even less time. They don't cook there for a few days at once, as we do. According to the Ayurvedic theory of six tastes, a person will be healthy and quickly feel satisfied with the food he eats if it has a harmonious combination of sweet, sour, bitter, astringent, salty and bitter tastes. In India, when they cook, they strive to ensure that these six tastes are present in the dishes. In addition, they eat food slowly, chewing food thoroughly. Different states of the vast country have different cuisines, but we can identify a common basis for all regions: spices. Just like in Pakistan, in India you cannot do without spices. In addition to the fact that they increase the taste value of dishes, they also stimulate digestion and activate metabolic processes. Spices contain many microelements and have good antioxidant properties. In addition, they lift your spirits. Olga said that she once suggested: in India, everyone smiles because there is a lot of sun there? But Karan either seriously or jokingly said: this is because we eat a lot of spices. And there are more than a hundred names of them in India! Olga cited an interesting scientific observation: when we feel a pungent or bitter taste, our body 'thinks' that it will hurt further. But it doesn't hurt, and then oxytocin is released: the hormone of happiness. Here is a man smiling! There are a number of spices in India that are consumed on a daily



■ Chargé d'Affaires of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Republic of Belarus Rakhmatullil Nazarov continued the presentation *Culinary Traditions of Uzbekistan*



■ Another sign that the Prodexpo-2023 exhibition-fair really has high international authority is the speech at the presentation Armenian National Cuisine by the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Armenia to the Republic of Belarus, Permanent Plenipotentiary Representative of Armenia to the statutory and other bodies of the CIS Razmik Khumaryan (left), as well as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to the Republic of Belarus, Mr. Nguyen Van Nguy, who presented the diverse cuisine of their peoples.

basis. Talking about them, Olga asks the question: which one reduces the craving for sweets? As a fan of India, having visited the 'spice state' of Kerala four times, it was easy for me to figure out: cardamom! And it is right! As a reward, I received a certificate to attend a master class on spices and Indian cuisine. Well, Olga talked about masala tea (in Hindi: a mixture of spices). And meanwhile the water began to boil. Karan added cloves, green and black cardamom, dried and fresh ginger, cloves, and black pepper to the tea. The tea boils for about five minutes, then milk and sugar are added to the pan. Meanwhile, Olga still managed to talk about numerous legumes: chickpeas, lentils, mung beans, red and white beans, arhardal, uratdal... But we didn't know that in 2019 the UN declared February 10th World Pulses Day to draw attention to this healthy food. We also heard about rice, vegetables, fruits and various flatbreads popular in India, about

the benefits of ghee and chutney sauce. And about the fact that in India they pickle not cucumbers and tomatoes, but mangoes, chilies, lemons, cane, in mustard oil and spices, and eat them in little bites. And finally, tea. Olga herself saw how chaiwalas on trains carry tea throughout the carriages, and, interestingly, drinking tea in Hindi sounds the same as in Russian: 'chai pili'... We also drank hot, invigorating masala tea from Karan — smiling. And with pleasure. We also gratefully treated ourselves to snacks: coconut sweets.

Uzbekistan

Chargé d'Affaires of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Republic of Belarus Rakhmatulla Nazarov continued the presentation *Culinary Traditions of Uzbekistan* after the host's welcoming speech. First, he spoke about the rich culture of Uzbekistan, the monuments and attractions of the country included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, the ancient routes of the Great Silk Road, nature reserves and national parks that are attractive to tourists. He spoke with pride about Uzbek cuisine and the culinary traditions of the country, as a symbol of oriental hospitality. He shared information that at the end of 2018, according to National Geographic

magazine, Uzbek cuisine took first place in the Gastronomic Tourism category. However, the country is recognised as an attractive tourist destination by many other experts. Rakhmatulla Nazarov named a number of dishes that lovers of delicious food might enjoy: Tashkent festive pilaf, samsa, kebab, manti, shashlikh, shurpa, lagman... And following the Ambassador, his young compatriot in a national costume spoke captivantly about the enormous respect of the Uzbek people for bread, about careful and respectful attitude towards every baby. At the end of this ode dedicated to bread, I cited an Uzbek proverb: you cannot live without bread, you cannot be satisfied with words. However, the presentation hasn't yet moved on to bread: they showed a national dance (meddley), a video about Uzbekistan and national cuisine. And then there was a tasting, the main feature of which was the luxurious aromatic pilaf, samsa and other pastries.

Armenia

Another sign that the exhibition-fair *Prodexpo-2023* really has high international authority is the speech at the presentation *Armenian National Cuisine* by the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Armenia to the Republic of Belarus, Permanent Plenipotentiary Representative of Armenia

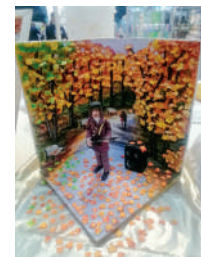
to the statutory and other bodies of the CIS Razmik Khumaryan. "It's gratifying," said Mr. Ambassador, "that Armenian cuisine will be presented at the exhibition. It cannot leave anyone indifferent: both true connoisseurs of gourmet dishes, gourmets, and ordinary tasters who came to taste our dishes. Armenian cuisine is diverse in terms of taste, emotions, history and traditions. Perhaps, such diversity in our country, like in yours, is connected with the traditional love for guests, who, like Belarusians and Armenians, need to be fed deliciously. I can talk about the brightest Armenian cuisine eloquently and for a long time. But so as not to create the impression that this is a subjective impression of an Armenian, a bearer of this culture, I will read the words of a true master of culinary culture, an expert in gastronomic history, the author of numerous books and monographs on culinary topics, Vilen Pokhlebkin, "Armenian cuisine is one of the oldest cuisines in Asia and the oldest in Transcaucasia. Its characteristic features developed at least a millennium BC during the formation of the Armenian people and have been preserved in many ways for more than three thousand years to the present day." To this I will add: modern Armenia is always happy to receive guests, connoisseurs

of culture, including Armenian cuisine. Armenia has an important gastrotourism destination, as evidenced by numerous authoritative publications, such as Forbes magazine. Armenia is not only temples, but also food, imbued with endless love." Thanking the organisers of the exhibition, Mr. Ambassador invited everyone to visit his native country, taste the Armenian sun and get acquainted with the national cuisine, with which the world, in his words, becomes brighter, more colourful, filled with tastes and aroma. And he said: we will taste a dish prepared by the Grigoryan family, whose dishes are present at such major celebrations in Belarus as, for example, the Republican Festival of National Cultures in Grodno, the International Festival *Slavianski Bazaar in Vitebsk*. This family prepared treats for the *Prodexpo* guests, who were waiting for everyone on a large table in front of the stage. Everything that was there had a special Armenian flavour. There are large walnuts in clay jugs, hazelnuts in ceramic vases with Armenian designs, and pomegranates on a platter. Khachapuri and other pastries are also here. As soon as the video about Armenian cuisine ended, Nela Grigoryan appeared on stage with her assistant Violetta. And she conducted a master class on



making khapama, stuffed pumpkin. This dish is often prepared during the holiday season. Khapama, according to national traditions, was served at the wedding table as a symbol of abundance. And it's easy to prepare. The top of the pumpkin is cut off, we select its insides — and the pot is ready. It is greased with oil and filled with rice, dried fruits, nuts and honey. And all this splendour is baked in the oven. Overall, it was a spectacular and delicious show accompanied by the melody of the song *Khapama*. When Nela Grigoryan prepares this dish, she hums it all the time. Then the Armenian students sang it. The soloist of the Presidential Orchestra, Anahit Gevorgyan, also charmed the guests: she performed two compositions on the kanoon, an Armenian multi-stringed instrument.

■ And there are such cakes — real works of art, reproducing the compositions of popular fairy tales, cartoons and simply luxurious bouquets. It's hard to even believe that all this is edible.





■ The work of confectioners, representatives of Belarusian bakeries participating in the High Fashion in Confectionery Art competition was amazing. These were dresses, as well as stylish art compositions.

...Yes, and I already bought a suitable pumpkin for the khapama: from a farmer from the Polissya village Nikolai Rubel. I think it will turn out to be a khapama!

Vietnam

The final presentation *The Beauty and Taste of Vietnam* also did not leave the exhibition guests indifferent. Although we were a little tired from the tastings, the most persistent ones immediately perked up as soon as the Vietnamese began to set the table. I wonder: what will surprise you?

Dishes with finely chopped mangoes, pineapples, rice chips, some kind of flaky stuffed tubes, slices, and also cups filled with ground coffee with sugar — all this was unusual. What is Vietnamese cuisine like? After the song of the Vietnamese students, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to the Republic of Belarus, Mr. Nguyen Van Nguy, mentioned it in his welcoming speech. He emphasised that it was a great honour for him to take part in such a presentation. “Potash fertilizers, machinery, equipment, tools, cars, spare parts, computers, medicines, polymers, milk and other dairy products are exported from Belarus to Vietnam,” he said. “Rubber, telephones, seafood, accessories, nuts, canned fruits and vegetables, shoes and other goods are supplied from Vietnam to Belarus. It’s no secret: today Vietnamese supplies of coffee, rice, and spices occupy first place in the world market.” In addition, the Ambassador added, “Vietnam is a kind of bridge between Belarus and Asian countries...” Mr. Ambassador also said: the visa regime for citizens of Belarus has been increased to 45 days of stay in Vietnam. He invited everyone to visit his beautiful country, where there are many beautiful parks, nature reserves and attractions included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, as well as resorts of international importance. And he expressed great satisfaction that trade, economic and cultural cooperation between Belarus and Vietnam is developing.

We also watched a three-minute film about Vietnamese cuisine, and then listened to a musical composition on the clarinet, performed by a Vietnamese student. And at the end of the presentation of national dishes of Vietnam, as at previous tastings, everything that was on the table received the attention of the exhibition guests. We enjoyed eating mangoes and pineapples and crunching on rice crisps. Everyone was also attracted to an exotic fruit — a red dragon, similar in appearance to a red beet. And there was plenty of coffee...

...And finally, we serve dessert

Of course, I cannot cover or describe all the features of the *Prodexpo 2023* exhibition-fair. But I hope that my mosaic notes will become a reason for someone to take a closer look at this most interesting phenomenon in the future. After all, as you know, food is a very important part of every person’s life. And let’s not forget: this is also a factor of national security for all countries, and an area for establishing business, trade and economic, as well as cultural contacts between countries and peoples.

And finally, as happens in good and rich feasts, let’s serve something sweet... More precisely, let’s pay tribute to the people who sweeten our lives.

International competitions of professional skills were also held at the exhibition among confectioners and chefs. The work of the confectioners participating in the *High Fashion in Confectionery Art* competition was amazing. These were dresses, as well as stylish art compositions. You could not only admire all this beauty, but also taste the petit fours cakes. Young people, future chefs and confectioners, students of culinary schools and colleges took part in the competitions. For example, Ivan Burdyko from Borisov State College presented molecular cuisine dishes: a menu in honour of the holiday of the elements. He prepared... fried lichen with red caviar.

We also saw a sandwich with black caviar, but in fact it was a chocolate cake. Various sweets were presented at the International Confectionery Championship to suit every taste and size. Among the works one could admire baskets of flowers, a bouquet for a beloved, and a composition based on the popular cartoon series *Masha and the Bear*. Even the handsome Ivan Tsarevich, racing with Yelena the Beautiful on the Grey Wolf, inspired one of the confectioners to create such a sweet creation. I wonder what it tastes like? Are there aromas of herbs and wind, a taste of fairy tales and adventures?..

I was also impressed by the anti-gravity cakes. Have you heard of these? Yes, it turns out that the law of gravity can be circumvented with various tricks. Moreover, this is not magic, but high confectionery art. A master class was devoted to the preparation of such cakes. Yes, you guessed it: the cake is made using a special technology. Its components are supported by frames.

Well, women’s jewellery, in particular earrings and brooches, which can be worn and then eaten — of course, it’s also better to look at them. Or should I try it anyway?

Valentina **Zhdanovich**

Photo by the author

HISTORY IN MINIATURE



Have you ever thought about how much a small postage stamp can tell? This is not just a government postage sign. As Irina Shipilova, head of the Marka publishing centre of Belposhta RUE, says, one of the main functions of a stamp is to create a postal chronicle of the country. On postal miniatures we can see architectural monuments, portraits of famous people, products of folk craftsmen, nature, illustrations related to memorable dates or events that are currently taking place in the country, its traditions and achievements. The publication of state postage stamps is preceded by a lot of preparatory work to collect information and proposals from government agencies, public organisations and individuals, as well as work to identify the most significant of them, because the number of stamps issued is limited — about 60 postage miniatures per year.

Thematic plans are formed 1 year before the start of the planning period. Today, the thematic plans for the publication of state postal payment marks of the Republic of Belarus for 2024 have been approved.

Talented artists, designers and specialists from the Marka publishing centre of Belpochta RUE are involved in working on the original layouts. The themes are carefully verified for historical accuracy by experts in the field of culture, history and architecture.

Secrets under a magnifying glass

The Marka publishing centre is a creative laboratory of the Belarusian post office. 39 people work here. Postal product

layouts are developed by 4 designers. Each has its own unique style, its own approaches to presenting illustrated material.

And they have to solve difficult problems, which is associated with the small size of the postal products, and this should in no way affect the disclosure of the topic or the volume of illustrated and textual material. We must not forget that connoisseurs of postal miniatures, armed with magnifying glasses, examine the smallest details on stamps and read microtexts.

“It is considered good form to produce postal products based on a hand-made drawing. Not everyone can draw the base of a postage stamp. There must be an understanding here that when the drawing is reduced many times, any detail must be readable. Therefore, when we give the terms of reference to an artist, we clearly state what we want to see and in what format the drawing should be,” Irina Shipilova reveals some of the secrets of the success of the Belarusian brand.

What are the most popular and collected topics in philately? This question is difficult to answer. After all, postage stamps are most often collected on a historical or thematic basis. In the historical principle of collecting, stamps are arranged according to the date of their issue. Thematic philately — collecting postage stamps on a specific topic or stamps associated with a specific concept (event).

The most popular and sought-after topics in philately: state symbols and heraldry, art, mechanical engineering, sports, flora and fauna.

We also have to take into account the various requests of philatelists. There are those who can collect special collections.



For example, one of our clients collects postage stamps with a picture of a clock. That is why Belarusian stamps are informative; the images on them often include many different details.

Based on the drawings of Aleksandr Mityanin, who has a biologist education, postal products are being developed on the theme *Flora and Fauna of Belarus*. Projects on ornithology, the Red Book, and the Black Book (where invasive species are depicted) are in particular demand not only among domestic collectors, but also among foreign philatelists.

I would like to talk about the security elements that are applied to postage stamps during printing in order to prevent them from being counterfeited. Security elements have been used on Belarusian postage stamps since 2000. Now all postage stamps of the Republic of Belarus use security elements in the form of inscriptions and figures with paint that glows in ultraviolet rays.

A special feature of the protection of artistic postage stamps is the originality of their execution. They complement the plot of the postal miniature and are of interest to philatelists.

New Year's story

"We are patriots, we love our enterprise and our work," shares Irina Shipilova before showing the New Year's stamps for 2023, which the publishing centre team has been working on for about a year. "Usually for the winter holidays we issue two stamps — one dedicated to the New Year, the other to Christmas. Sometimes we add a third brand — to Kolyady. And this year we made a large series for the first time, consisting of eight stamps!"

By the way, New Year-themed stamps have been created in our country for three decades, and this is about 50 stamps.

The unusual thing about this year's project is that in artistic miniatures the creative team was able to combine two themes — anticipation of the holiday and... the work of the Belarusian post office.

"We told the artist Viktor Chaychuk that we would like to show operational aspects, introduced him to the company's brand book, showed him what mailboxes and bags of postal workers look like, what corporate colours are used. It was decided to present technical aspects using drawings that can take us back to childhood, when on TV screens and good old postcards we saw drummer bunnies, foxes, bears," says Irina Shipilova.

It's interesting to even just look for 'postal' details on stamps. We see how Father Frost reads letters, how the forest post office works, how birds bring correspondence, and a cheerful snowman, responsible for motorcycle delivery, carries gifts. This storyline is continued on envelopes and postcards. The products in this series can be used in classes with children to tell them about the holiday, about the work of the post office, or you can come up with your own New Year's stories based on them.

Leading Designer of the Marka publishing centre Yevgenia Bedonik tells how postal miniatures were created. First, the artist made a large number of sketches in pencil. Some of them were selected for further work. Somewhere the characters were

replaced, for example, in the drawings, instead of a raccoon, which is not typical for the fauna of Belarus, a beaver appeared. It would seem, well, what difference does it make who is in the fairy-tale picture! But collectors who follow postal traditions and rules do not forgive anything.

After the sketches were approved, the drawings were drawn in detail using watercolours, coloured pencils and black ink. Next, the designer got involved in the work.

"I start working when all the illustrations are ready. Looking at them, I understand what the stamp and stamp sheet will look like, which illustration is suitable for the First Day envelope," shares Yevgenia. The designer can replace the background, add small details, develop the artist's idea and even create an illustrated story based on all the mail thumbnails, create beautiful margin artwork or coupons (thematic pictures that reveal or complement a certain theme).

This is how a whole New Year's fairy tale was created from this year's holiday stamps. Well, looking at these bright, warm pictures, it's impossible not to remember the past, when we, young, with our mothers, took out postcards from our numerous relatives from mailboxes, or, having just learned to read and write, we ourselves diligently wrote out congratulatory words for those closest to us.

Such a different holiday

"We have a special attitude towards developing an assortment of New Year and Christmas themes. While waiting for the holiday, receiving good news from a loved one is priceless. The older generation especially understands this. And at the post office we remember those times when there was a queue for postcards. People did not buy one or two postcards, but took them in packs. And then they signed it for their relatives more than once," notes Irina Shipilova. "Of course, we live in new realities. The Belarusian Post is also developing technically, offering new services, and the volume of emails is increasing. But stamps, envelopes and cards are our good traditions. We try to maintain interest in them: we reduce circulations, but increase the range. At this stage, we also offer a large selection of New Year-themed souvenirs: magnets, mugs, calendars, stickers, etc."

Nowadays, there are no longer the same volumes of outgoing written correspondence as before, but even among today's youth there are those who like to send and receive letters and cards. There is an international project — postcrossing, in which people from different countries exchange postcards. On the eve of the winter holidays, they try to congratulate their foreign friends, which means that beautiful New Year cards and stamps will be especially in demand.

The range of double greeting cards is impressive. On them you can see all the classic attributes of the holiday — Father Frost and the Snow Maiden, New Year's decorations, birds, clocks, angels. There are postcards with state symbols. They can have inscriptions in Russian and Belarusian. The new collection is made using combined varnishing and thermal lifting.

"This year we began working with private collector Vladimir Likhodedov. Based on materials from his collection, a series



of postcards *I am writing to you...* and *Merry Christmas!* were released. Postcards from the early twentieth century are not at all similar to those produced today. We simply repeated the plots of old postcards, and gave explanatory information on the reverse side," said Irina Shipilova.

You can come to the Belarusian post office now to get in the festive mood. The New Year's programme has been completed in full and has been sent to the postal offices of the republic for implementation.

The Post Salon, which is located at the Minsk Post Office, was also immersed in the festive atmosphere. Here you can take a photo near a Christmas tree decorated with handmade toys, get acquainted with the chronicle of New Year's issues over three decades, and even place an order for the production of your own postcard.

What features does the collection material have?

Postage stamps, being a collection material, not only do not lose their material value over the years, but also acquire it. Issued in a certain edition, they are sold out, their number on sale decreases, and demand is constantly increasing.

The release of each postal miniature is at the same time painstaking work, research work and, of course, creativity. And we can say with confidence that the postal issues add up to a bright, dynamic chronicle of the country. It is not for nothing that the apt expression 'a postage stamp is the calling card of a country' has long become popular.

Yelena Dedyulya



CREATING THE FUTURE!

This is the slogan of the 29th Minsk International Film Festival Listapad, which was held in Minsk on November 17th-24th. This year, filmgoers in the regions of Belarus were also involved in its opening, simultaneously with the celebration in Minsk: in more than 80 cinemas in the country. A celebration of cinema, a film forum of talent, beauty and hopes that we will all become at least a little better by coming into contact with high cinematic art and watching films from different countries, took place.

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The official opening of *Listapad*, this brand forum, took place in the capital's Dom Kino cinema. Everything was bright, festive, with the obligatory red carpet, the shine of spotlights, flashes and specific sounds of working photo and television cameras, musical hits, animation and fun, radiant smiles of ladies, floor-length dresses and elegant tailcoats with bow ties, the scents of different perfumes that created a single a niche scent that enveloped and united everyone that November evening.

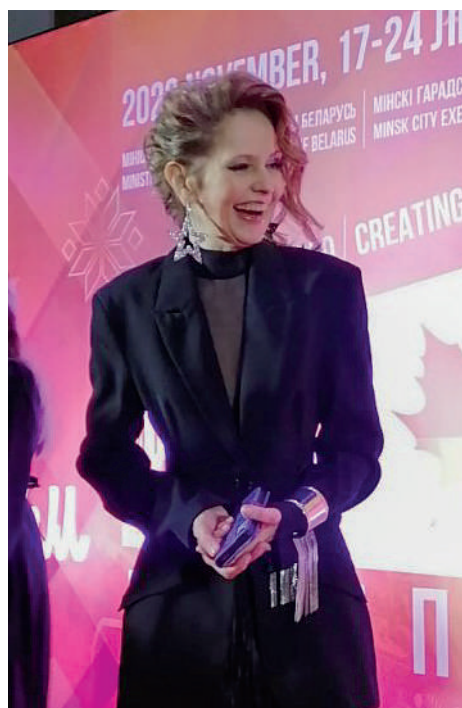
Famous Belarusian and Russian actors, film critics, screenwriters and film directors walked along the red carpet. It was also a place of communication for many participants in the celebration. Among the guests one could notice Valeria Gushchina, director of the Russian Film Actors Guild, a regular guest of *Listapad*. This is what she said that day a little earlier to journalists at a press conference, "I remember very well how 29 years ago Rostislav Ivanovich Yankovsky invited me to be part of a small delegation at that time, which was going to Minsk for the first time to a new film festival. And today, fortunately, his work continues. I think that at one time Rostislav Ivanovich wanted to give Belarus a huge, huge holiday. And he did it somehow easily, unobtrusively. And we were happy because we felt inseparable from the other peoples of the vast Soviet Union. Yes, this is our common past. But life goes on. The festival today shows the best films from all over the world and discovers young names. And I wish the film forum special success, because I believe in young people. Why has *Listapad* captivated me for 29 years? Because the programme that should be implemented at the festival is always clearly visible. And this is not just a demonstration of new films. This includes signing cooperation agreements." Valeria Aleksandrovna came to the festival with a gift for the recently appointed general director of the Belarusfilm film studio, Yuri Aleksei: she brought a rare book about the history of the Union of Cinematographers of Russia. Yuri Maryanovich, by the way, also walked among the guests. At the traditional press conference, held in the morning on the opening day of the festival at the Press House, he told us: the most spectacular category promises to be *Fiction Cinema*. Personally, the director, as he put it, really likes documentaries, which were also widely presented at *Listapad*.

The Chinese delegation was especially popular with most of my colleagues who surrounded the red carpet: producers, actors, photojournalists and other workers from the Chinese film industry came to us. Everyone at the film forum already knew (such news spreads quickly in the film community) that representatives of the Chinese film company Sichuan Blue Eyes Film and Television Culture Media Co., Ltd., on the eve of the next film festival *Listapad*, visited the Belarusfilm film studio, where we discussed further cooperation. And at the press conference they talked about the feature films that will be presented at the festival — although, without going into too much detail, so that it would be more interesting for us to watch. "The film *Butterfly Lovers* is based on the famous Chinese legend of lovers Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai, which is an intangible cultural heritage of China. This story

is similar to the story of Romeo and Juliet. The second film is called *Dark Forest*, and it has a strong message on the topic of anti-drug," Lei Han, film and television actor and producer, told reporters. And he added, "I have been working in the film industry for many years. Now in China, many processes associated with filming are done using modern technology — without the use of human hands. In Belarus, people still play the main role in the filming process, so we can say that Belarusfilm has preserved the traditions and soul of Belarusian cinema."



■ Waiting for the celebration



■ On the red carpet are Belarusian, Russian and Chinese actors, film directors, film critics, and screenwriters. Among them are Vera Polyakova, Honoured Artist of Belarus, Vyacheslav Nikiforov, Belarusian and Russian film director, Lei Han, Chinese film and television actor, producer, Valeria Arlanova, Honoured Artist of Belarus, Chinese delegation representing the film industry of the Celestial Empire, as well as Aleksandr Yefremov, Chairman of the Minsk International Film Festival Listapad, theatre and film director, artistic director of the Film Actor Theatre Studio.



By the way, at the press conference on the opening day of *Listapad*, the future collaboration of Belarusian and Chinese filmmakers was also discussed. “The main theme in the film will be friendship and love between representatives of Belarus and China, especially between young people,” said Lei Han. “We would like to use this film to show how Belarusian and Chinese youth live, to reflect the beauty of Belarusian nature, traditions, and historical heritage. The main goal is to show how, with the friendly peaceful coexistence of two peoples, stability and order can be ensured throughout the world, and that these are the main values that all humanity should adhere to.” For your information, the film will be filmed both in China and in Belarus. The creative team will include specialists from two countries. And, by the way, on the sidelines we have already heard talk that now Belarusian actors, as well as cameramen, directors and other film industry specialists, should start studying Chinese at least at a basic level. Apparently, one greeting ‘Ni hao!’ will not be enough for work. Moreover, the official launch of the film project is scheduled for January 20th, 2024: in honour of the anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Belarus. The large festive crowd included many students from the Academy of Arts and the University of Culture and Arts. We also saw the faces of some diplomats from countries friendly

to Belarus, familiar from other cultural events. In particular, the Ambassador from Zimbabwe, who happily took a photo with us, showed great interest in the Minsk Film Forum. Vera Polyakova, Honoured Artist of Belarus, a former TV presenter, and now the head of the Theatre for Young Spectators, walked brightly along the red carpet. However, we previously presented it to the readers of the Belarus magazine. This time I managed to interview her briefly. And this is what she said, “Thanks to the festival, once a year we have the opportunity to show ourselves, talk about ourselves, show our creativity. We work all year to be able to submit our paintings to the competition. Like a theatre festival, a film forum is needed so that serious, thoughtful professionals in their field appreciate your work. After all, it is very important when we exchange some opinions with each other, when we show what kind of cinema is in other countries, when we share our aspirations, problems as well. We also establish contacts here and conduct negotiations. It seems to me that this is not just a meeting of friends, but it is also a very cool, cool communication and collaboration... I played various roles at the festival: in the competition programme, as the host of the ceremony, and simply as a guest star. But over the years, one thing has not changed — the warm atmosphere of joy, meeting with those people whom you love and appreciate. It happens that in a whole year we don’t meet and communicate

as much as we do in this week of *Listapad*. I hope that we will bomb the thirtieth festival so that the whole world will know about us. I sincerely wish this, and I am ready to help in every possible way, because I would like the anniversary festival *Listapad* to have a red carpet on Oktyabrskaya Square, as it happened before. Or so that its opening will take place in the Palace of the Republic in the Great Hall, and so that all movie lovers can enjoy this wonderful event.” Soon, the hosts of the red carpet ceremony, Honoured Artist of Belarus Ruslan Chernetsky and TV presenter Yekaterina Tishkevich, invited us to the auditorium, where the festive opening of the festival awaited the public. The Presidential Orchestra of Belarus under the baton of maestro Vitaly Kulbakov set the solemn tone for the entire performance. To the sounds of music that announced the beginning of the celebration, Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus and Chairman of the Festival Organising Committee Igor Petrishenko stood on the stage of Dom Kino to announce the greetings of the Head of State. The warm words of Aleksandr Lukashenko are addressed to the guests and participants of the film forum, this beautiful universe living according to the laws of humanism and spirituality. “For several holidays, Belarus will unite a whole galaxy of star and very young filmmakers,

whose art is based on the high ideals of truth and goodness — qualities for which our state is rightfully famous.” Aleksandr Lukashenko expressed confidence that the event, held this time under the motto ‘Creating the Future’, will give many positive emotions to fans of modern cinema and will become a powerful incentive for further popularization of the ideas of peace and friendliness. The Head of State wished the guests and participants of the festival a great mood, inexhaustible inspiration and success in all their endeavours. And we remind readers that *Listapad* has always been and is being held under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko, who sincerely loves cinema and has established special prizes to reward festival participants, which are awarded at the opening and closing ceremonies of *Listapad*. An important and honourable mission — to present a special Presidential Prize ‘For the preservation and development of traditions of spirituality in cinema’ — was also carried out by Igor Petrishenko. This year, by decision of the Head of State, the winner of the valuable award was the theatre and film director, chairman of the *Listapad* film festival, artistic director of the Film Actor Theatre Studio, People’s Artist of Belarus Aleksandr Yefremov. Accepting the prize, he said in response, “I am extremely grateful to the Head of State for this award. This is a huge honour and a huge responsibility that I am aware of. The festival began with the assistance and serious participation of Aleksandr Grigorievich. His attention to our festival is honourable and obliges us a lot.



■ In the photo, the Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Zimbabwe in the Republic of Belarus Ignatius Graham Mujimba with translator Yulia.



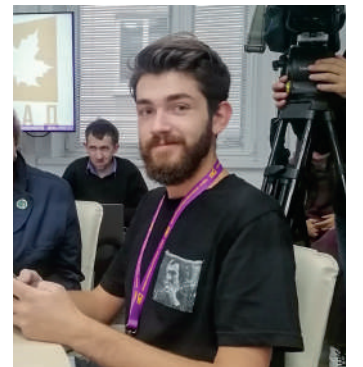
■ Guest from China
■ The ceremony was hosted by Ruslan Chernetsky, Honoured Artist of Belarus and TV presenter Svetlana Tishkevich



■ Igor Ugolnikov, actor, film director, screenwriter, producer, TV presenter, chairman of the jury of a fiction-film competition



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■ Vera Polyakova is in great demand among television journalists
■ Kirill Khaletsky, Belarusian film director made his debut with the film *Filmmakers*, which opened the film festival

I hope that we can cope and the next festival will be held with dignity, like all the previous ones. I thank you again for this prize.” Aleksandr Yefremov also remembered Rostislav Yankovsky, People’s Artist of the USSR, who led the festival for many years, as well as the director of *Listapad*, Valentina Stepanova, who put a lot of effort into making this festival find its identity. “I won’t forget how happy Rostislav Ivanovich was that this festival took place, and that the next one would be coming soon, and how he certainly read poetry. He understood that one must speak about art in the high style of which poetry is capable,” said Aleksandr Vasilyevich and he himself read a quatrain from one of his favourite poets, the greatest Chinese poet Li Bo of the Tang Dynasty, who is called ‘the Chinese Pushkin’. As far as he, according to Yefremov, was harmonious in relation to the world, so harmonious are his poems: ‘In the flowing water there is an autumn moon // There is peace and quiet on the quiet lake // And the lotus wants to tell me about something sad // So that my soul would be full of sadness’. And he read the second poem — this time by Yevgeny Yevtushenko (a Russian poet, his mother, by the way, had Belarusian family roots), which the poet addressed to all people who are trying to create something unique and dear to them. From the lips of Aleksandr Vasilyevich it sounded like a prayer, at the end of which there were the following words: ‘Oh, God, let me be a poet! / Don’t let me deceive people.’

“Oh, God let me be a poet! Don’t let me deceive people”
As you know, if we like something - whether people, the books we choose to read, or poetry — then this speaks about our inner world, our desires, and characterises ourselves. This is how Aleksandr Yefremov indirectly expressed his desire for the truth of life in relation to his work. There was also hope in his words that the film festival would bring films that ‘won’t deceive’ us, but will convince us of the creative viability of those who created them.

By the way, before Aleksandr Yefremov broke a traditional plate on stage — for good luck! — on the film camera tripod and declared the festival open, he explained to the public why the slogan ‘Creating the Future!’ was chosen for the festival, “We just need to understand each other. There are many of us today, representatives of different countries, but we dream of the same thing. The future is not so far away. This is not a Fata Morgana or some castles in the clouds. It is much closer: the future is us. But what are we? What do we do, what do we hope for, what do we dream about? And what are they capable of for the sake of these dreams? So what do we need? So that there is peace on Earth, so that the country prospers, is prosperous, so that children grow up happy, and a bright and happy future awaits them. And so that we can be calm for our loved ones. And so that there are more films about a happy life. Yes, it doesn’t seem to be as much as it seems at first glance. But no: that’s a lot! And in order for this to happen, we need to do a lot, a lot... I wish for all of us that our future will be the way we dream and imagine it. Be happy everyone! Prosperity to the festival! Lots of good movies, lots of interesting meetings!”

So, the plate was broken, congratulations were heard from the presenters on the opening, applause in the hall and the festival anthem. Popular performers and theatre artists of the country, in particular the Bolshoi Theatre of Belarus, famously sang famous film tunes and timeless hits. *Listapad*, as the hosts of the ceremony said, is a big story that was created by talented and extraordinary people who gave their strength for the formation and development of cinema. The song *Thank You Everyone!* was dedicated to them who passed away. based on poems by the Russian poet Vladimir Ilyichev and the Belarusian composer Leonid Shirin. It was soulfully performed by the incomparable Aleksandra Gaiduk, a Belarusian actress and singer, laureate of the Order of Francysk Skaryna. The audience listened to her standing.

And on the screen at the back of the stage flashed the faces of departed film directors, screenwriters, theatre and film actors.

During the opening ceremony of the festival at Dom Kino, Yelena Spiridovich, Honoured Artist of Belarus and permanent host of the international arts festival *Slavianski Bazaar in Vitebsk*, also appeared on stage. She spoke about the development of the film festival in its early years, and also shared her thoughts on why the *Listapad* film festival arouses such great interest among viewers, “Because the audience was and remains the main characters at *Listapad*. It’s not for nothing that for the first 15 years it was they who decided the fate of the main festival prize: the audience voted

and awarded *Listapad* gold. When Rostislav Yankovsky invited me to become the host of the film festival, it was then called the International Film Festival of the CIS and Baltic Countries. The festival was very necessary for Belarus, first of all for viewers — people who not only loved cinema, but also wanted to know what new and interesting things were happening in the world of cinema and what had happened over the

past year. It was still very much needed by Belarusian film masters — people who make smart, beautiful, high-quality, professional films in our country. The festival is not only about presenting your works, but about meeting colleagues and filmmakers from different countries here, on your own soil. And, of course, the Belarusfilm film studio and Minsk cinemas needed it.”

Through a movie screen and a comic song in imitation of Figaro’s operatic aria, performed by Bolshoi Theatre soloist Aleksey Makshantsev, the public was introduced to the festival’s film programme, as well as members of the jury. Its members included famous figures and leading experts in the field of international cinema. The jury was headed by Igor Ugolnikov, a Soviet and Russian actor, film director, screenwriter, producer, and TV presenter. By the way, the jury of the main feature film competition this year included two representatives of the Chinese film industry. Lei Han, whom we mentioned, is also the CEO of Sichuan Blue Eyes Film and Television Culture Media Lei, as well as Wang Xiaomeng, film producer, deputy of the Committee on Chinese Emigrants of the National People’s Congress and chairman of the Huaqiao Association of Chinese Compatriots Organisations. The creatively structured opening ceremony of the festival on the stage of Dom Kino ended with the screening of a feature film by the young Belarusian director Kirill Khaletsky *Filmmakers*, dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the Belarusfilm film studio.

As Kirill told reporters on the red carpet, the film tells the story of a young director Nikolai Khrulev, who is assigned to a film studio after graduating from a creative university. “He is only taking the first steps in his creative career, dreaming of making films. Kolya thinks that, having been assigned to a film studio, he will be able to do a lot, that all doors will be open to him, but in life it turns out that not everything is so simple. And yet he stubbornly pursues his goal... I like that the film



■ Director of Belarusfilm studio Yuri Alexey



- The solemn tone of the opening ceremony on stage was set by the Presidential Orchestra of Belarus conducted by maestro Vitaly Kulbakov
- On stage - the incomparable Alexandra Hajduk



- An important and honourable mission — to present a special Presidential Prize 'For the preservation and development of traditions of spirituality in cinema' — was also carried out by Igor Petrishenko. This year, by decision of the Head of State, the winner of the valuable award was the theatre and film director, chairman of the Listapad film festival, artistic director of the Film Actor Theatre Studio, People's Artist of Belarus Aleksandr Yefremov.
- Soon the traditional plate for luck at the festival will be broken



was created in tandem by young and experienced creative people. The young people brought the necessary passion, a new look and a new vision to the film, and the experienced ones shared their experience and secrets of working correctly in the 'big cinema...'. Kirill Khaletsky also admitted: it is a great honour for him to open the 29th Minsk International Film Festival *Listapad*, when both a sophisticated viewer and expert filmmakers are in the hall.

"It's great," he said, "that the film will be widely released in the future."

Briefly speaking about the film, the most important thing about it, apparently, is that its tone is optimistic, the film was made with talent, with subtle humour and many film allusions — light references to the past. And besides, the film successfully resonated with the festival's slogan: creating the future. The film exudes the freshness of youth, which knows how to live in the moment — today, now. At first glance, the film is a clip film, all made up of disparate puzzles that are eventually put together. It becomes clear why the creators needed all this. And you understand: modern young people know how to appreciate and respect the experience of their older colleagues, if they are honest and truthful in their work. They know how to make friends and love, and also treat with humour the difficulties that are inevitable on the path of creative search.

This year, the festival received 2,087 applications from 107 countries. For comparison: in the past — about 1400 from 86 countries. The geography of participants covers Europe and Asia, Latin America and Africa. Leaders in the number of applications in the feature film competition: India, Iran, Pakistan. Interesting projects from the Russian Federation have been proposed for display. Screenings in Minsk took place in four cinemas: Dom Kino, Belarus, Tsentralny and Pioneer.

The Pioneer Cinema was the main venue for the children's film festival. 317 works from more than 20 countries were submitted to the film competition for children and youth

Listapadzik. The selection was strict, and only 8 films were included in the competition programme.

The Belarus cinema screened films presented as part of the animation and Cinema of the Young competitions. At Tsentralny they showed films from the program of the main feature film competition.

In the first days of the festival, we were able to watch a film that won international film festivals, which arrived at the film forum from Japan. *Cat Island*, directed by Yuji Nomura, tells the story of how a chance discovery and a mysterious woman can turn the protagonist's life upside down.

We also watched a documentary film by Belarusian filmmakers *Ozarichi. Polyssia Tragedy*, which was presented by SorokoVid Production Centre. It was a non-competition screening at the Belarusfilm film studio. Thematically similar to this work was the film by their St. Petersburg colleagues, *The Last Witness*, in which the directors address people who, each in their own way, experienced the hardships of the Great Patriotic War, using the means of cinema to illustrate and comprehend their everyday stories. At a creative meeting with the audience, the famous writer, entrepreneur, and producer Valery Soroko spoke about why he turned to cinema. The son of a war veteran, who himself went through difficult trials in life, Valery Illarionovich invests his money in creating documentaries that help people distinguish between good and evil, appreciate their history and cultural heritage, telling about famous people.

Film *Ozarichi. Polyssia Tragedy* tells how in February-March 1944, the Nazis drove more than 50 thousand civilians into the swamps near the village of Ozarichi behind barbed wire and used bacteriological weapons there for the first time: they infected the prisoners with typhoid fever. For what? To create a 'human shield' in front of the advancing Soviet troops. Olga Daineko, a 96-year-old witness to those terrible events, talks about this terrible crime. She managed to survive the swamp hell, and then was reborn to a new life. The director of the film, Valery Korolev, believes that the example of such people

is priceless for all of us, "Olga Andreyevna was able to survive, got married and gave birth to 5 sons. She has 16 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren. In her mature years, she retained a clear mind and a wonderful sense of humor." It is worth noting that the film *Ozarichi. Polyssia Tragedy* was watched by spectators in 40 cinemas and schools in Belarus during the festival.

Cinemas Dom Kino, Tsentralny and Pioneer were the main venues for showing out-of-competition films. The film festival, as already mentioned, started simultaneously in all participating cities by region. Both in large regional cinemas and in small cinema outlets in agricultural towns and schools, competitive and non-competition films were shown in full. We learned about this even before the start of the festival from the executive director of the film festival, Alesya Zhornikova. "The cinema presented at the festival this year, which is made for the viewer, is not bohemian cinema, not art house. These are films in which we do not see attempts to create some new film language. This is a movie that will talk about people," Aleksandr Yefremov briefly described the films presented at *Listapad*. "Each country shows its people in pictures. But it is surprising that in many of them the problems raised become common for the entire cinematic space, for all viewers who love cinema, know and want to see themselves in this film, their own feelings, their own thoughts and the belief that the world is fair."

This is what it is, our *Listapad*. We can say that what films are selected for screening, what directions for creative search the organisers welcome — this has its own philosophy. Well, as

a familiar film critic wisely noted at one of the meetings, the main problem in cinema was and remains the problem of choice. However, is she only the main character in movies? The organisers of the Minsk Film Forum formulate their goals very clearly: they are creating the future. Belarusians are for creative cinema. Moreover, such a positive film message to the peoples of the world (2087 applications from 107 countries!), as we see, finds a living echo among filmmakers from different countries and continents. And this request for creation and peace, of course, is in tune with the Year of Peace and Creation in Belarus.

Valentina **Zhdanovich**
Photo by the author

P.S. For more information about the Minsk International Film Festival *Listapad*, its programme, participants, winning films in various categories and about the festival jury, visit the film festival website: <https://listapad.org/>

THE CHAUFFEUR EFFECT OR THE ILLUSION OF KNOWLEDGE

The distortion that destroyed empires and prevents each of us from living

Common mental traps include persistence (continuing to do something that has lost value to us), procrastination (putting off solving any task until the last minute) and its opposite — preemption (starting too early). Simply put, mental traps are our wrong actions and actions, which are sometimes based on mistakes, misconceptions and lead to loss of time. At the same time, we are absolutely sure that we are doing everything right.

One of these traps can be called the ‘illusion of knowledge’ or the ‘chauffeur effect’. What is it and how did it get its name anecdotally? How is it dangerous for ourselves and society? How to determine whether the chauffeur in front of you is a ‘chauffeur’ or a real professional? And how can each of us get rid of the ‘chauffeur’ mentality? A neurosurgeon, a researcher at the Department of Brain Tumours of the Republican Scientific and Practical Centre of Oncology and Medical Radiology named after N. N. Alexandrov, and a teacher at the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery at the Institute for Advanced Studies and Retraining of Healthcare Personnel of the Belarusian State Medical University Gumen Ghorbannijad talks about this.

“The ‘chauffeur effect’ is considered one of the most common mental traps. Why?”

“From childhood we are taught that man is the most perfect being, the pinnacle of creation. But it’s not right. If we were told from childhood that a person is imperfect, has a large number of shortcomings and must constantly work on himself, doubt more, then we would think more.

Man is imperfect in everything. If an engineer built our body, he would make it stronger so that we would not break limbs when we fall from our height. I would make the larynx longer so that we don’t choke when we drink or eat. Our body has numerous physiological deficiencies; we are imperfect. And one of the imperfections is our brain. It makes many mistakes and distortions in concepts and conclusions. The simplest distortion is a mirage, when we see water instead of sand.

One of the mistakes that our brain makes if it is not trained is that it is not important to us what is said, but who says it. If something is said by a person who we like and who suits our thinking, then we perceive him better. If a person whom we do not like or consider to be our enemy says the same thing, then we will not trust his words.

Another example of distortion. When one young man asked the priest if it was possible to smoke during prayer, he replied that it was forbidden, since it was a great sin. And another then asked differently, “If I smoke, can I pray?” Of course, the priest answered. “The more you pray, the more God will remember you.” Essentially the same question, opposite answers.”

“Let’s return to the ‘illusion of knowledge’. Where does the name ‘chauffeur effect’ come from?”

“When the physicist Max Planck received the Nobel Prize for the discovery of quantum mechanics, he spent a long time touring European universities with lectures, explaining his revolutionary discovery. Each time he was accompanied by the same chauffeur, who then jokingly said that he had already heard this lecture so many times that he could read it himself. To which Max Planck instantly agreed.

At the next university, the driver gave a lecture on quantum physics, and since in 1919 people did not know what the real Max Planck looked like, no one noticed the substitution. Moreover, the driver confidently answered all the standard questions from the audience, because he had also heard the



answers to them many times. And only in response to an unusual question from a specialist, the driver said ‘well, this is such a simple question that even my driver can answer it’, and pointed to Max Planck standing next to him.

This real-life anecdote is nevertheless an example of a fundamental phenomenon that is extremely common in groups of people formed along some professional principle — for example, scientists, doctors, politicians or investors. This effect has existed for a long time and has been widely used for political and other purposes.”

“What is its essence?”

“Only a few people are truly professionals (Max Plancks) who are at the forefront of their industry. There are many more imitator chauffeurs. They learn the role and answers to standard questions. They receive respected degrees or other evidence of their professional worth. They perfect their confident appearance, they are calm, their speech is convincing. Outwardly, they are absolutely indistinguishable from Max Plancks. But they remain imitators — in non-standard situations where the expertise of professionals is needed, they are useless.

Moreover, it does not matter what level of education a person has or what position he holds, he has such distortions, and this causes global damage to our society, life and thinking. Many people, no matter what sphere they come from — medicine, economics, religion, management, culture — are a little ‘chauffeurs’. We encounter them every day and sometimes we ourselves are a little ‘chauffeurs’. And the

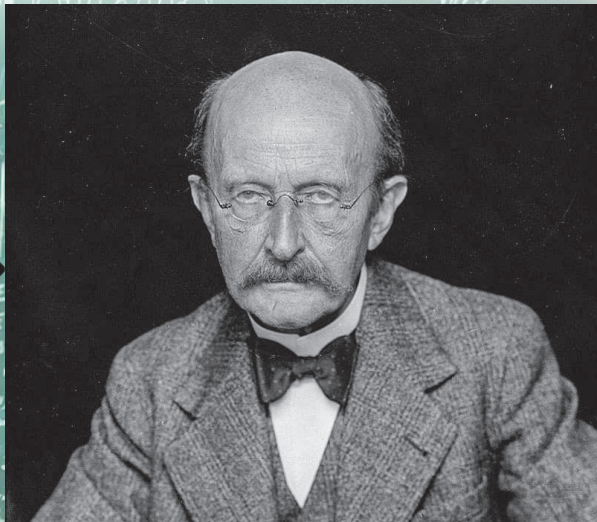
more ‘chauffeurs’ we are, the more we can influence others. If you take three people, one of whom is completely unprofessional, the second is a student, the third is a professor, who will apply for the position of head of the enterprise, and the workers must vote, they will most likely choose an unprofessional, since he is a bigger ‘chauffeur’. He does not know the laws of economics, the intricacies of production and sales, but he promises a lot — to raise the plant to another level, increase wages, release new products. The student, based on the little knowledge he has, will say: perhaps we will release it, but perhaps it won’t work out, perhaps we will reach another level, but not a fact. But the professor will say that first we need to reduce salaries and fire some workers, after which we will achieve profitability... He painted the most realistic picture of the future of this plant and did not deceive anyone, but, unfortunately, he will not get any votes. As a result, they will choose an unprofessional, the plant will go bankrupt, everyone will be left without work, but sometimes that’s how they choose. Therefore, the ‘chauffeur’ effect is quite destructive.

Many doctors, because of their stereotyped knowledge, having listened to an advertisement from a pharmacological company, begin to prescribe some medications without delving into what complications this may cause, and ultimately risk harming the patient. A politician who does not delve deeply, but knows the problems superficially, can pursue policies that will lead to wars or the collapse of the economy. ‘Chauffeurs’ see only the tip of the iceberg, and to imagine its lower part, they need to go deeper into the problem.”

“Are there examples in history when this mental trap was used and changed the course of events?”

“The ‘chauffeur effect’ was used by Genghis Khan. He was distinguished by the fact that he knew how to surround himself with wise people. His adviser Yelu Chucai is famous for his phrase, “An empire is conquered by horse and sword, but it is not ruled by horse or sword.” When Genghis Khan captured Persia, he asked his advisers how to rule it, because the occupied territory was much more developed. One of the advisers proposed appointing not the smartest people to the administration, arguing that in this state of affairs they would gather around them people like themselves, while the smart ones would scatter. But such people will not betray Genghis Khan, because they will feel obliged, and the empire itself will collapse. This shows how destructive the chauffeur effect is.

It was used by the Anglo-Saxons during the colonial era. To spend less on the army, they used such techniques. The same ‘chauffeurs’ were appointed or promoted to high positions, they collected their own kind in the leadership, and professionals left because of this. As a result, the country fell apart on its own. Therefore, many sociologists believe that the ‘chauffeur effect’ is a very dangerous trap for the individual himself and for the development of society. Global decisions in



politics, economics, medicine, religion, science, culture, education are made by 'chauffeurs' who do not have global knowledge."

"How to determine whether imitative 'chauffeurs' or real specialists are running an industry or an enterprise?"

"If we see a large number of high-ranking economists, but the economy in this country is not developed, then most of them are clearly 'chauffeurs'. The same thing, if there are many specialists in the field of medicine, but medicine is at a low level, or a large number of military men with high ranks, but the army is weak, this indicates that the number of 'chauffeurs' prevails over real specialists.

It must be said that when the process of globalization is underway in the world, in order to mitigate its impact and stand firmly on its own two feet, each country needs to strive to accumulate more real specialists, and not 'chauffeurs'."

"What is the danger of the 'chauffeur effect' for each of us?"

"Every person, no matter what academic degree he has or what level of knowledge he has, from time to time succumbs to the illusion that he has completely understood the situation and found a way out. In fact, he may be mistaken and see only the top.

Therefore, we should admit that we are imperfect and remember that sometimes we are 'chauffeurs' — some more, some less. And every time we are going to draw some

conclusions, think carefully so as not to fall into the trap of the 'illusion of knowledge'.

The danger of the 'chauffeur' psychology is that when he encounters a real professional who seeks to explain something to him or prove something with facts, the 'chauffeur' always wants to fire, expel, or destroy such a specialist, since their ideas and opinions do not coincide. Therefore, we must doubt more, listen more and accept other opinions, reason. If we are self-confident, then we do not perceive new knowledge, other opinions and, finally, a world that is changing. This is the psychology of the 'chauffeur'."

"Is it possible to somehow correct this defect?"

"In order for our brain to do this and reach a new level, we need a collision of two opposing opinions — they are called thesis and antithesis. The result is a new opinion, which is called synthesis. When we say, 'I think so, period', what does that lead to? There will be no clash of opinions and no synthesis will emerge.

Based on the fact that over time our own knowledge increases and human knowledge grows, the synthesis again turns into a thesis, which in turn encounters an antithesis, which creates a new synthesis. This is what we call the spiral development of society. 'Chauffeur' thinking inhibits the collision of thesis and antithesis for the emergence of new ideas. It's not for nothing that they say that you should always listen to your enemy, because he will say what our friend does not say."

Yelena Kravets

AND THEN LIFE IS LIKE A HOLIDAY

Yes, this is not always the case... Then the value of the holiday increases many times over, says director Agata Motsko.

For her, any holiday must be justified: why can we rejoice? She knows how to touch a nerve through backstories and allusions, no matter what day of the calendar in Belarusian history you have to imagine. But Agata is the director of the most significant public festivals. This is the kind of work when you have to represent Belarus, its traditions and history. Day of Belarusian Written Language or Dozhinki — people must understand where they are and why. Our conversation is about what a holiday is for herself.

"What is most important to you: your own director's version or our national identity?"

"Mostly in my profession I come across the problem that I need to show Belarus. It is clear that we show it through creative groups, musical and artistic material. But these state events are based not only on culture, but also on our past, present and future. Culture is a part and, probably, a means to show Belarus. And, for example, if we are preparing the anniversary of Belaz (Belarusian Automobile Plant), we study the field of mechanical engineering and immerse ourselves in it. What's important to me is not the director's ambitious implementation. I'm interested in showing that Belarus is people. In particular, I think people are more interested in what's happening on stage because when they see or hear something familiar, they immediately respond. Or if we discover something completely new. For example, there was an amazing story about how Belarusian fishermen rebelled against the Pilsudski regime, or the dramatic story of Bereza-Kartuzska — these are facts that need to be told to people. Therefore, I consider myself a person who searches, explores and shows history and reality using the example of individual facts."

"If you take a single fact as a basis, then you have to select teams with numbers that are suitable for this idea.

Does this mean that you have to know everything that is being created in the country?"

"Yes, you need to be as aware as possible of what is happening today in the creative environment, what artists are emerging. But the idea of the concert does not depend on this.

Sometimes it comes quite unexpectedly. For example, I love traveling around Belarus. Sometimes you talk to some old lady, and she tells interesting stories of her family or her locality. For example, in our village I always saw metal stars, old, sometimes painted, on the corners of houses. Mom once asks: 'Do you know what this means?' 'No.' 'This means that veterans lived in these houses after the war.' I understand that this is a tradition that was founded in Soviet times; our generation may not know about it. But today there is continuity of this tradition: signs on houses indicating that a veteran of the Great Patriotic War lives here. And I'm trying to play up this fact — the past and the present, in order to convey this information to people. After all, not everyone travels through villages and pays attention to the stars on the houses.

And if we talk about groups, then this is already a creative moment, my personal intuition also works, who can portray, show, sing better. There is an understanding that there must be folk and honoured artists in the concert. But if we want to celebrate a regional feature, then we want a group associated with this region to perform. For a team from the outback to reach the big stage. We try to do everything to ensure that the level of recording or phonograms of these groups or artists from the people corresponds to today's show technologies."

"How much has technology made it easier for directors to complete tasks?"

"Solving some problems has even become more complicated... Previously, people went to concerts to listen to music or good words. Today everyone surfs the Internet, watches a lot —



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we perceive everything visually. The word ‘spectator’ is more suitable for today than the word ‘listener’, hence there are more demands on the quality of the show. I strive to use technology as much as possible. The show itself is written in advance. The director not only has to say where the lighting is needed, but where the special effects are needed. There is a concept of time codes (this is how it works all over the world), that is, you can press one button and the entire two-hour show will go on without stopping. It is important to use technologies today; they help provide entertainment so that the viewer is surprised, involved, and impressed.”

“And all this time you are inside this process, and in the end you look at what happened and what could be changed, or are you still in charge?”

“I am 100% in charge, but I am not behind the scenes, but at the console, where all the technologies from sound to kinetics are collected. Because there are different cases, because technology is a ‘digit’ that can fly at some point, and it is not always possible to notice in time that something on the screen or an artist is not at the right point on the stage. Sometimes our artists get carried away and forget that as part of the show they must not only sing, but also move. Sometimes the audience’s emotions make adjustments. There was an incident on National Unity Day when one artist stopped exactly on the line where the rollup for projection should go down, and at that moment I simply paused everything...”

Directing holidays all over the world is considered a difficult field, because you don’t have the opportunity to do another take, like in movies. There are only two hours non-stop, and the viewer sees all this immediately, he will remember your every mistake. Therefore, it is very important to anticipate all possible failures. You know the number and imagine what pitfalls it might contain. But I have a very strong team, we make the show in such a way as to always be as involved as possible.”

“When we watch concerts, everything is perfected, all artists must understand where, when and how they should behave on stage. How is this clarity achieved?”

“Clarity is achieved primarily through time. But, as a rule, we always don’t have enough time for rehearsals. The second important factor is the professionalism of the artists, from soloists to ballet. First we have a stage where everyone rehearses in their halls. Because on the set we have no right to waste time, energy and resources looking for some kind of mise-en-scène. This is the stage when everything is put into place, checking how it looks on camera. There is a nuance

in working with amateur groups, because they need more time. For example, they need to dance on the stage of the Palace of the Republic, and they are required to go through the dance pattern correctly in 15 minutes, without losing anything from the number. This is the difficulty. But this is the beauty: when a kid comes out from the Belarusian outback and dances, and several thousand people see him...”

“Is it very different when a director works with professionals and with those who just love to sing and dance? People are different, and there may be different degrees of stardom.”

“There is such a word as ‘stardom’... But I try to distance myself as much as possible from communicating with artists. Our team works in such a way that everyone has their

own task. We have a music producer for all projects, Evgeniy Kurchich. We determine that we would like this or that artist to perform here, for example. Zhenya or my assistants contact them and clarify their availability and willingness to work for our task. And then designers, choreographers, and arrangers work with them. We meet with the performers on the site, discuss where I want to see the artist, how he should appear, and so on. My entire team is involved in working with artists. But this does not mean that I close myself off from artists. If you have questions, you can always ask me, and I will answer.”

“Directors are usually very emotional people, due to the fact that they have to control a lot.”

“Maybe it’s my character... I actually started out as a film director. I

usually work as a director of crowd scenes and battle scenes in films. This is a very difficult and dangerous process. There, if you looked in the wrong direction or were distracted, irreparable things could happen. And I was the second director, who monitors the work of all workshops. At the beginning, there were also emotions on my part. But then I realized that if you can’t change anything, then there’s no point in getting emotional. And if you can change, then you need to talk to people. The calm arose probably because I like talking to people to solve problems.”

“How did you get into cinema? You graduated from the University of Culture?”

“In my second year, it seems, I was called as a crowd scene assistant for the filming of the film *In June ’41*. And such projects still happen. Recently there was filming in Kazakhstan, I lived in Almaty for four months. It was a movie musical based on the songs of the A-Studio group, in which I was the director of crowd and musical scenes.”



“How often do such projects happen?”

“If I wanted, we would come more often. But today I have already decided that I want to be in the country, I want to work sincerely and do as much as possible for the people. Because, it seems to me, at some point our holidays and our concerts became the same. There is a general idea — Independence Day, but everything is the same as on another holiday. And when, while preparing a concert for Independence Day, you get acquainted with some facts, immerse yourself in the details of historical events, you begin to be proud of your country. And when I celebrated the BelAZ anniversary, I admit that I became a fan of these big cars. We worked with the factory workers — we saw how talented the designers are, how virtuoso the drivers are who drive these giants. So far, I have a great desire to meet and introduce people to what I see and feel.”

“Who did you learn from?”

“I was very lucky. Firstly, I studied when Yadviga Dominikovna Grigorovich was the rector, and I am grateful to her beautiful Belarusian language. Plus, I studied with the best directing teachers. These were Pyotr Adamovich Good, Alexey Yakovlevich Kaminsky, Yulia Moiseevna Chernyak — we had the whole cream of Belarusian directing at that time, everyone who, in fact, created our festive culture, laid its foundations. And the most important thing is that our teachers were practicing directors. It was a blessing if we were involved in organising holidays, even if it was just necessary to serve flowers on stage. Because you got to know the profession right on the set.

When we came to study, we received knowledge of how to make holidays that were relevant at that time. There was not a single extra item. The history of holidays from Ancient Greece to the development of theatrical culture in Belarus was raised. This all gives an understanding of the space, the site, and so on. As for the traditional Belarusian holiday culture, we immersed ourselves in it, starting with rituals. And they correlated this with today — for example, festivals of national cultures and the Day of Belarusian Written Language. By the way, I remember the Day of Writing as a grandiose holiday, which began with a large procession with city standards. This year, since there was an anniversary holiday, I correlated this tradition with a modern understanding.”

“Is your mother, who encouraged her to pursue this profession, now not worried that her daughter’s life is hectic and rather stressful?”

“It happens that my mother is perplexed because of how she sees my life. For example, I’m leaving for the village, and someone calls me: urgently for a meeting! Mom says: ‘It’s like you live according to the laws of wartime...’ True, she’s proud. But there was a moment when she said that she probably shouldn’t have sent me into this profession. When I arrived home, I just didn’t feel at all, and I just needed to recover: lie in the grass and just look at the birch tree. This really helps. I was born in Minsk, but spent my entire childhood in Grodno. Mom worked in the city executive committee in the cultural department, she is an architect and inspector

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for the protection of architectural heritage. That’s why I love Belarus and am interested in history. When the festival of national cultures appeared in Grodno, my mother was one of the workers’ organisers and accompanied the delegations. I walked hand in hand with my mother from the very first festival until the moment I left to go to university. And then she returned as the director of this festival.”

“Do you have enough time for anything else besides the holidays?”

“Now I feel like I’m missing my personal creativity. It is clear that directing holidays is also creativity, and it is also very personal. But I have an idea for two film scripts, and I’m trying to approach them. It seems like I have time, I sit down, work for a few days, and then get caught up on the holidays again... I once talked with the famous architect Yuri Gradov, who said: ‘I am working on several projects at the same time. And when I realize that I’m a little out of breath in one of them, I switch to another — and while I’m drawing, my brain works better.’ Me too. I’m always working on multiple projects, and when I think about one, I bring something new to the other. Therefore, there are thoughts not only about the holidays. There is also something that sits deep in your head and won’t let go.”

“I have a principled approach to team selection. These are my creative like-minded people. It is important for me that there is a very good, kind climate in the group. Many will say that I am a calm director, because I can’t stand panic, I don’t accept hysterics at all, like any negativity. And the team selected good-hearted people who are ready to adhere to the credo — to be neat, cultured, positive people. In fact, all our concerts and shows are born not in arguments, but in kindness, friendship, even some kind of inner love, like in a family.”

“Those events that affected your family?”

“The theme of the Great Patriotic War is important in our family. My dad is Belarusian, my mom is Russian, both my grandmothers are children of war. But I was surprised by the difference in their understanding of the war. Because one grandmother from occupied Minsk joined the partisans, and when they passed through the swamps, the police shot at them to cut off the path... The second grandmother was from near Smolensk. During the liberation of the city, they were all sent to the trenches for safety. My grandmother, as a child, ran from one end of the trench to the other. Some soldier besieged her and said that bullets were flying around. To which my grandmother said that they whistle so beautifully... But it seems to me that the post-war period was no less difficult, because there was nothing, and there were no men, everything rested on women, thanks to whom life was preserved and the country was restored...”

“Do you collect such stories and then it is reflected in your concepts?”

“Yes, this is probably my main principle.”

Larisa Timofhik



FROM VYTINANKA TO BELAZ, OR THE MAGICAL POWER OF CRAFT

Among the artists of Belarus who create and strengthen a special world of intangible historical and cultural values, the name of Natalya Kuletskaya is very well known. And this autumn, the Belarusian art of vytinanka, which she is a true master of, along with the unique Neglyubka textile tradition, is proposed to be included in the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

I believe that Belarusians have every chance to be included in this list. After all, as you know, at the end of last year at the 17th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO in Morocco, a decision was made to include the Belarusian category 'straw weaving of Belarus: art, craft, skills' in the UNESCO list. And before giving the floor to my interlocutor, let us clarify in general terms for the reader what this is.

The list, according to professionals, includes customs, traditions, knowledge and skills that are passed on from generation to generation. By the way, a convention was signed in 2003, the purpose of which is to preserve and support these traditions throughout the world. To this end, UNESCO supports its member states, promotes the preservation of traditions and supports the environment for the protection of intangible heritage, which is part of the spiritual culture created by past generations, that withstood the tests of time and which is passed on to descendants as something valuable and revered. As for vytinanka, it is an openwork pattern cut out of paper: black, white or coloured. Or, to be more precise, it is a paper cutting technique. The resulting decorative product can be a curtain, a napkin, a panel, a 'nabozhnik' (this is a decoration around an icon or crucifix in the 'red corner' of the house). Its main purpose is to decorate the home. However, there are also vytinankas-postcards, vytinankas-decorations, and also vytinankas-illustrations. The basic principles of vytinankas remain unchanged today: the main material in this technique is paper, and the working tool is scissors.

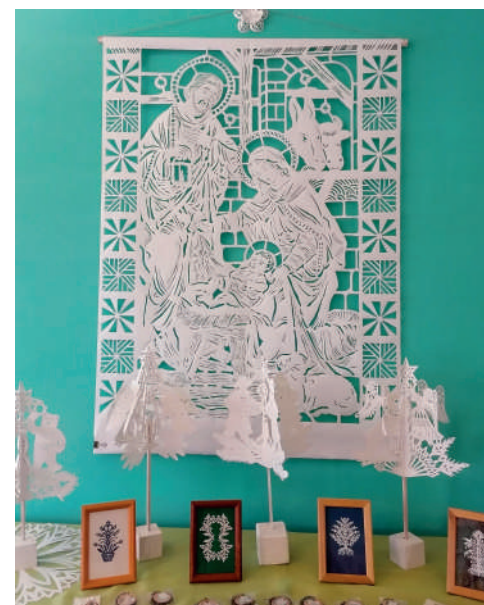
Our conversation with a member of the Union of Folk Craftsmen of Belarus, a kindergarten teacher and defectologist from Kosovo, in the Ivatsevichi District of the Brest Region, Natalya Kuletskaya, is about a unique national element of Belarusian culture — vytinanka.

“Natalya Mikhailovna, where do you think this art of paper cutting came to Belarus from?”

“We know that the paper comes from China. Apparently, they started cutting there for the first time. Wherever it appeared, the art of paper cutting arose. There is information that silhouette cutting was widespread in Europe — these are portraits, in Latin America — themed cutting, in other countries, including our neighbours, something of their own...”

I am inclined to assume that the vytinanka also has its own Belarusian roots: its prototype can be called seals from the so-called letters of the Grand Duke of Lithuania Vytautas. I read somewhere that the archives of Vilnius State University contain several 16th-century vytinankas. They were made by officials during breaks between working on documents. Before the people had the opportunity to cut out openwork patterns from paper, there was already a tradition of decorating houses with cuttings on fabric, openwork patterns from bark (for example, birch bark), even on dried leaves. Therefore, I think the development of paper vytinankas should be counted from the 16th century, when the first domestic paper mill was founded in Nesvizh in 1560. By the beginning of the 18th century,

■ Fragment of the triptych The Nativity of Christ and the triptych My Belarus



MASTERS

there were already about 30 of them. As soon as paper became cheap and widely available, it began to be actively used in everyday life.”

“Please explain to us what the word ‘vytinanka’ means.”

“Vytinanka — this is how the word sounds in the Belarusian language — is a derivative of the word ‘vytsinats’, that is, ‘to diligently draw a melody or pattern’, ‘to do something painstaking, requiring a lot of attention and diligence’. As I already said, it appeared in Belarus in the 16th century and

is deep Pollysia. I remember that even in her pantry the shelves were decorated with karunkas. In the Western regions of Belarus, as far as I know, even multi-layer multi-coloured vytinankas developed, which were also called ‘vykleyankas’ (from the word ‘glue’ in Belarusian), since layers of different colours were cut out separately (while maintaining one of the key rules — a design cut from one sheet of paper, should continue to ‘hold on’, without falling apart into separate fragments), and then glued layer by layer onto white or coloured thick paper...”



■ Mosaic of vytinankas by Natalya Kuletskaya

reached its peak at the beginning of the 19th century. In folk art it has acquired all the properties of traditional fine art. This is decorativeness, symbolism, and utilitarianism. From thin white paper, our ancestors cut out openwork curtains for windows (firankas) and decorations for red corners in the house, as well as roosters, angels and stars (‘snowflakes’). These figures were also glued to the glass of windows.”

“I remember well how, as a child, I also cut out snowflakes and pasted them on the window before the New Year and Christmas...”

“And I did that. After all, I come from the village of Chemely, Ivatsevichi District. And both my grandmothers had vytinankas-karunkas in their huts. On the shelves... My mother’s mother is from the village of Korachin, this

“Do you think vytinanka is a purely feminine art?”

“I believe, not only women, but also children, and men too, were engaged in cutting out vytinankas. All family members tried to decorate their home in some way, including with vytinankas. For example, complex pictures were cut out of black or purple paper, which looked beautiful against the backdrop of a whitewashed stove or wall. Over time, real masters appeared who stood out for their talents in this area; they performed work to order, and their work later served as models for copying and borrowing. The pattern remains, as I already said, to this day. In recent decades, it has experienced a rebirth in urban everyday culture: it is used to decorate windows, shop windows during holidays and to attract attention in interiors in public places. I think vytinanka has reached the professional level.”

“But paper products are so short-lived... They turn yellow...”

“And there’s nothing wrong with that. A person needs to constantly create, this need is inherent in us by nature. If the vytinanka turns yellow, we’ll cut a new one! There must only be desire and ability. Yes, paper decorations, especially white ones, quickly lose their appearance: they curl and become covered with dust, so they were ‘updated’ and replaced with new ones before Christmas and Easter. And the old ones were most often burned — extremely rarely

foreign ones: Chinese, Lithuanian, Polish. And, of course, our traditional art form. She showed me how to work with paper.”

“By then you knew what it was...”

“Certainly! I remember well the firanka curtains on the windows of my Pollysia grandmother. I also remember how, as children in her hut, from a shelf covered with vytinankas, we, the grandchildren, would take out a vase of sweets and, sometimes, we would catch the edge of the vytinanka and

■ These works by the folk artist of Belarus participated in the traditional festival Three Feasts, which took place in Moscow in August 2023



preserved in order to have a sample of the pattern. New patterns for the home could be cut out yourself, ordered from a craftsman, or even bought at a fair.”

“How did you come to vytinanka?”

“It all started with additional education. In 2002, while working here in Kossovo as a preschool teacher, I went to advanced training courses in Brest. And there we were taught unconventional ways of working in appliqué. The courses were taught by teacher Nina Mikhailova. And she showed us the vytinanka at its best. Including



■ 4. With the large scissors that Natalya Kuletskaya holds in her hands, they sheared the sheep, not only cut out vytinankas. They belonged to her mother Maria Yermachek, who was also a teacher at the beginning of her career



damage it. The paper is delicate, thin... And grandma saw this, and then forced us to cut out new vytynankas. The art of vytynankas in our area in the form of firankas and sub-patterns was common. There was also a ritual fabric; it was used to decorate the coffin with the deceased. But the pattern there was not a complex, it was modest and used crosses.”

“It turns out that the courses contributed to the awakening of your creative abilities?”

“You can say so. The art of vytynanka made a huge impression on me. We tried to cut out snowflakes there, so I tried to cut them at home. Maybe I used up five packs of paper until I could get something right. I already went to the first

competition with a small creative baggage of firankas. This is what window curtains are called — I repeat this for those who are not in the know. And the whole family went to the *Under the Roof of Your House* competition; my husband, a carpenter, represented wooden products. The youngest son was still a schoolboy and painted pictures. And then we took second place in the Brest Region for family creativity. From then on it went...”

“And they began to actively invite you to competitions?”

“Yes, including big ones. In 2019, I received the Grand Prix at the Slavianski Bazaar in Vitebsk. I presented the *Folk Dances* collection there. I completed it as homework. We also did the work *Three Trees Near the Mother’s House* —

right at the republican competition *Openwork Dreams*. The jury members watched the process itself: it was something like a master class. By the way, every year *Slavianski Bazaar* is dedicated to various Belarusian crafts: pottery, straw weaving, vytynankas, weaving... And so on.”

“Is there something similar in other countries?”

“In Ukraine, I know, such competitions were held before. And in China. They are still taking place online. But there are more exhibitions. The largest international exhibition is the Lublin Kirmasz in Poland. I was there three times before the pandemic. This is an incredibly beautiful celebration of creativity. Masters of various types of art come there from different European countries. About 40 people travelled from Belarus.”

“Are people interested in your works?”

“Certainly! I usually bring *Chyrvony Kut* (Red Corner): this is a tent decorated in folk style. This is now appreciated. Many people want to return to their roots, to traditions, to get away from plastic. People have bought my icons before and continue to buy them. Including in Moscow — there was an exhibition there in the summer.”

“What tool do you use?”

“These scissors (*shows*). Our grandmothers carved out vytynankas with similar ones. In fact, they bought these for another purpose: they used them to shear sheep. There were usually no other scissors in the huts. Tailor’s ones were used less often — only those who were engaged in such a craft had them. And these are my mom’s scissors. She also sheared sheep with them. My mother, Maria Vasilyevna Yermachek, was also a teacher at the beginning of her career. She completed pedagogical courses and taught in primary classes at the Chemely school. This is how these scissors cut (*demonstrates*). It’s large, as you can see, but you can get used to it and make it smaller — but it takes a lot of

practice. Usually the firanka curtains on the windows in the huts were simple. Uncomplicated, modest.”

“How do you come up with the idea of this or that design?”

“It happens differently every time. The idea of some works takes a very long time to mature. Let’s say I had an idea for a triptych *My Belarus*. At the beginning, I wanted to make the Kossovo Palace (a unique monument of neo-Gothic architecture of the 19th century is located in the Belarusian town of Kossovo. For its fabulous image and luxury, the palace of the Puslovsky counts (Kossovo Castle) was called a ‘knight’s dream’). The palace became decorative and very beautiful after restoration. And I wanted to show and highlight its magnificence. But how to implement this image by cutting it out? At first, of course, I thought about architectural forms and lines. Then in my imagination I created the surroundings around the palace. After all, a picture should tell the viewer something. And the vytynanka too. I tried to tell the story that the palace is in a wonderful place, where there are many lakes: there are five of them around. Therefore, look, there are even waves below. And since this is the Brest Region, I also cut out the bison. And there is also spruce, since in our area there are a lot of coniferous forests. I also presented ‘rushniki’ (towels): this is a symbol of Belarusian hospitality. Them I added storks: as hope for the future, peace and prosperity. Plus I cut out a rainbow above the castle...”

“And what is depicted on your vytynanka *The Nativity of Christ*?”

“On the eve of Christmas there is a mystery in Nature. Therefore, I wanted to convey, first of all, this atmosphere of mystery. I really liked the work of the vytynanka artist Daria Aleshkina: she is my fellow countrywoman, now she lives in Ukraine. She works in huge forms: she cuts out entire panels for windows and doors. Her grandmother comes from the village of Mir, famous for its castle. So I also

■ Natalya Kuletskaya uses vytynanka for jewellery — in medallions, pendants, brooches and earrings.

■ With the painting *Willow Buds*

wanted, following Daria, to make a large-scale composition *The Nativity of Christ*, in three parts over time. The hardest part was drawing everything. I spent more than a month on this.”

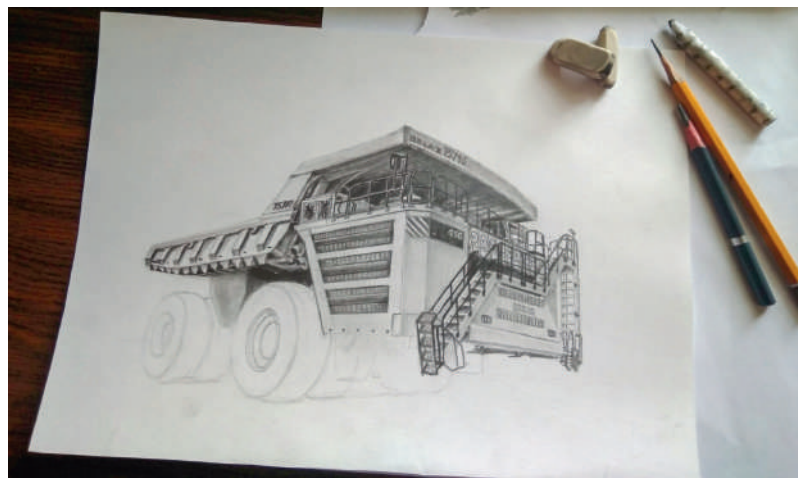
“Does your imagination tell you the themes of your vytynankas?”

“There are completely original works, and there are also borrowings. How can you come up with something new in terms of an icon and its composition? Of course, I





■ At BELAZ, in honour of the recent 75th anniversary of the enterprise, the winners of the prestigious competitions Person of the Year 2023 and Youth Prize Laureate were named. The winner of the youth prize was the youngest son of Natalya Kuletskaya, Sergei Kuletsky, who works as a design engineer in the Design Calculation Bureau of the Department of the Chief Designer of the Scientific and Technical Centre Named After A.N. Yegorov at BELAZ. The young specialist put a lot of effort into the 200-ton hydraulic crawler excavator BELAZ BX20012.



be seen live on the Internet. One of my latest works is swans. I was impressed by them when I was vacationing in the Narochanka sanatorium in the spring. On the lake there I saw a lot of seagulls and swans. Tall trees grow next to the lake. I came to the building and made a landscape right in the room. Moreover, these works are not drawn,

look at samples. I take something from the works of other masters. It's not that I redraw them, I look at them and get inspired by them. I study lines, the plasticity of images. There are canons. And I style my works according to them. Take for example the dance *Kryzhachok*. It seems that there is a compositionally constructed image of it (similar to the one on the Belarusian postage stamp), but he is also mine. I studied this dance myself. Here's the trick: the ducks seem to follow each other. And this move is repeated in different variations. And I also have ducks at the top: as a hint to the viewer. So ideas come into my consciousness in different ways. One day I went into a store and saw that the girl there was beautiful. We talked, she asked: can you do a portrait in the vytinanka style? And I tried it, made it from a photograph. And the *Secretary Bird*! Did you know that it is the only bird in nature with eyelashes? It simply amazed me with its beauty. Looks a bit like a stork. This beauty can

but cut, as they say, from scratch. And here is the work of 2022 *We Really Want Spring: Without Illness and Without War* (shows). You see, these are the buds of fluffy willows. I made it after Covid — that's why the vytinanka has such a name."

"Have you exhibited in Minsk?"

"Certainly! There was a huge exhibition in the University of Culture gallery. And I always come to the festival-fair of folk artistic crafts *Vyasnovy Bouquet* in May. I was in Alexandria for two years in a row with an exhibition at Kupala Festival. And I went to Moscow more than once. This year, there, in Yekaterininsky Park, an exhibition dedicated to Kupala was held. It was organised by the public organisation, Belarusians of Moscow, with the support of the Embassy of Belarus in Russia and our Ministry of Culture, as well as the Department of National Policy and Interregional Relations

of the Moscow Government in partnership with the Centre for Slavic Cultures. I took the triptych *My Belarus* there, as well as many other small works."

"Are you now the most famous person in Kosovo?"

"Well-known to some (*laughs*). As a People's Master of Belarus. In the book dedicated to the Belarusian vytinanka, it is also written about me."

"Does vytinanka help you when working with children with special needs?"

"Yes, I also use vytinanka as an opportunity to work with children. Here I illustrated the fairy tale *How the Hen Saved the Cockerel*. Children with developmental disabilities need detail at each stage of the fairy tale so that they understand its meaning and then be able to retell the plot. That's why I made a vytinanka fairy tale. It is also on YouTube. With the fairy tale, I entered the republican competition *Modern Technologies for Special Education*. It's nice that I was awarded a diploma there. Now there is another illustrated Belarusian fairy tale *Cat with a Golden Forehead*. Then we also made an electronic manual, which contains educational games. Thanks to them, play and education are combined."

"I see that you also use vytinanka in decorations?"

"In medallions, pendants, brooches and earrings. This is (*shows the pendant*) the Tree of Life. The connection with the ancestors is the root, the trunk is the present, and the crown is the future: let's say, the space of our descendants. And birds are like disembodied souls... There are also pendants with angels. I started making them because people want to take something from the exhibition as a souvenir."

"Do you also use the image of the sun? Previously, even spinning wheels were decorated with the sun..."

"There is no way to be creative without the sun. By the way, I have a spinning wheel at home. Little one, my mother's. Her father, and my grandfather Vasil Zybailo, was a good craftsman, he made spinning wheels so that you could sit on them and spin. My grandmother had a large spinning wheel, and my future mother had a small one, a child's one. She kept it, and we spun together: I know how to do it. Maybe this spinning wheel will wait for my granddaughters. My sons are not married yet."

"When the granddaughters appear, it will be necessary to get sheep, so that there will be yarn..."

"Well, if there are granddaughters, then maybe we'll start it (*laughs*). Our house is large, two-story and has a plot of 15 acres. And it has its own pond..."

"Do you live in Kosovo?"

"In the village of Dubitovo, 4 km from Kosovo, I go to work by car. Nearby is a forest and the Grivda river. Valery, my husband, is a jack of all trades. The easels for the fabrics are his works, and he also makes the frames for our son's paintings himself."

"Are your sons already adults?"

"Aleksandr is 30, Sergei is 25. Sasha is a mechanical engineer, graduated from Pinsk Industrial Pedagogical College. Due to health reasons, he works as a security guard at a school. For the soul he helps his father — they recently built a log bathhouse. And the younger Sergei works as a design engineer at BelAZ, in the Design Calculation Bureau of the Department of the Chief Designer of the Scientific and Technical Centre Named After A.N. Yegorov. Since childhood, he loved to draw and design. He graduated from the Kosovo School of Arts. A talented guy, his works hang in our home, in the hall. There are graphics, watercolours, and oil paintings on canvas. The son continued his studies at the Belarusian National Technical University as a mechatronics engineer. And then he ended up working at BelAZ in Zhodino. Not so long ago they built some kind of super bulldozer there, so he came and told how they started it..."

"Is it possible that the young design engineer also masters the art of vytinanka?"

"Actually, yes. After all, if a person is talented, then, as they say, in everything. I sometimes think: in our family, all the people are talented, and so is my husband. And it doesn't matter what craft you show yourself in. He who is a master, who, as they say, has his hands in the right place, will not be left without work at any time. I think Sergei would cut vytinanka well — he will cut anything. However, now the scale of his work is different, not miniature — Belaz (*laughs*). But if necessary, my sons and husband, of course, help me. This is the already established lifestyle of our creative family. Although, I admit, my men are sometimes jealous of my vytinanka. It also requires time and effort..."

"Creating vytinanka is, in my opinion, a kind of meditation..."

"Right! There is such a deep immersion into the inner world, into the image that you are trying to create, that the sounds of the surrounding world, the external one, cease to exist for you. You don't notice how time flies. Besides, it gives you such a pleasant calm and tranquillity when you pick up the scissors..."

Interviewed by Valentina Zhdanovich
Photo by the author and from the archives of the Kuletsky family



■ Photo for memory (at the request of the author)

WHAT BRINGS HAPPINESS



Belarusian fans of fine art associate the art tour show Artefact with Victoria Valuk, an artist who lives in Minsk. It started in February 2021 from the Caribbean and the island of St. Maarten. There, in the French coastal territories, the first artifacts were left. Then the geography of this avant-garde show expanded and covered Russia, Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, the Emirates, the Black Sea, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and continues successfully throughout the world.

This is, I daresay, the world's first solo art show in which miniatures painted on canvas by Viktoria Valuk are sealed in bottles and left in secret places in different parts of the world on land, or thrown into the sea.

Oil painting in the bottle

This fall we learned that on the distant mainland of Australia, another artefact was placed in a transparent bottle along with a note containing congratulations and wishes for happiness from the artist. It was left on September 2nd, 2023 in the city of Melbourne near the Merchant Mariners Monument, on Clarendon Street, Melbourne, Victoria. Thanks to feedback, it is known that on the same day it was found by a boy,

■ The first four artifacts of Victoria Valuk, from which everything began



■ The artifact in a bottle was left on the island of Barbados (the island, surrounded by coral reefs, is washed by the Caribbean Sea in the west, the Atlantic Ocean waters approach the shores of Barbados in the north and east)

with whom there were two adults, most likely his parents. Then they walked, smiling, and the boy held in his hands a glass vessel, from which a souvenir from Belarus could be seen. Moreover, there is photographic evidence of this. Thanks to this unusual, kind show, the artist's original works appear in different places on earth in order to convey to people the spirit of play and adventure, positive emotions and joy. And here's

how Viktoria talks about why she needs to make so much effort to keep this game going. "As you know, a personality is formed on the basis of cultural values, strengthens spiritually, and is enriched thanks to art. Just imagine: you are walking through your hometown. Sit down on a bench, say, near a fountain, or near a fortress, and next to you, between the stones or in the hollow of an old tree, you can see a transparent bottle in which

you can see something colourful... What will you do? Will you leave or will you be curious? Look around and ask: whose is this? They will shrug their shoulders, smile, maybe help open the bottle, and there is a picture and a note that says: you are lucky, and the contents of the bottle are a gift for you, for the one who found... I would certainly be surprised and delighted if life gave me such a surprise."



■ At the prestigious exhibition "Art connects Women", held in the United Arab Emirates about the pandemic, the artist represented Belarus with an abstract painting And a New Day Will Come. The painting is currently in Dubai. The exhibition featured works by 100 female artists from 100 countries. And among them she, the Belarusian Viiktoria Valuk.



With this original project, the artist seeks to draw people's attention to art and lift their spirits. I will not be mistaken if I say: it also helps to awaken a sense of peacefulness and trust in life, and if we take it more globally, it helps to strengthen peace and creation. After all, a person in a calm and joyful state of mind is capable of being a true peacemaker in the family and society, in social and cultural contacts. Each painting for the show is an original, the result of Viktoria's creative efforts: there are no copies among them. By the way, my interlocutor is an active participant in exhibitions: in the past she has had more than 90 of them. Viktoria considers it a great honour for herself when her works are side by side with the works of famous

Belarusian artists. This was the case with the exhibition Under the Blue Sky, which was held at the Representative Office of Rosstrudnichestvo in Belarus — this is the Russian Centre for Science and Culture in Minsk. "I'm very glad," she says, "that my painting Silence was presented at the exhibition." Viktoria especially appreciates it when her works undergo a difficult selection for exhibitions under the auspices of the Union of Artists of Belarus, of which she is not yet a member, the National Centre for Contemporary Arts, the Republican Art Gallery, and state museums of the country. And her paintings passed such a professional selection — Spring Palette, Orthodox Belarus, The Present, Textile Bouquet, Art Minsk, and others.

Belarusian name on the 'silver' list

Before the pandemic, Viktoria Valuk successfully participated in many reputable foreign exhibitions. For example, at the prestigious exhibition from the premium gallery ZeeArts, Art Connects Women, held in the United Arab Emirates, the artist represented Belarus with an abstract painting And a New Day will Come. The painting is currently in Dubai. The exhibition featured works from 100 women artists from 100 countries. And among them she, Belarusian Viktoria Valuk. "It was

incredibly joyful," she recalls, "to see talented representatives of different countries and continents together: Argentina, Belgium, Afghanistan, Iraq, Guatemala, Colombia, Mexico, Madagascar, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Zimbabwe — I can't list them all. Artists from any country, regardless of age, could participate in the exhibition, but only women. To get into the exhibition, an application to the curators, a photograph of work on the topic and, of course, a creative biography were submitted electronically for selection. The exhibition was not limited to just the exhibition of paintings, but also included other creative activities. By the way, this was in March 2020."

At the international competition of women painters, which took place in India, Viktoria was included in the silver list of finalists. She tells how one of the largest associations of Indian artists (Bindaas Artist Group) selected 1,841 works of 738 artists from all over the world for the competition. A professional jury selected 200 winners — 100 gold and 100 silver works, which were presented at the final exhibition. Viktoria Valuk was included in the premium 'silver' list. She submitted two works to the competition: Freya's Garden and At the Edge of the Forest. Now they can be seen at her personal exhibition Opera in the gallery

HOBBIES ARE DIFFERENT

of the
Minsk
Europe
Hotel.

"Art and culture are very important for people," Viktoria is convinced. "This is that wonderful healing elixir that awakens goodness and peace in a person's soul. Encourages each of us to be creative..." It's hard to disagree with this.

Creativity and joy in everyday life

What else can be added to the image of a person who works hard, looks at the world in an extraordinary way, knows how to play beautifully himself and is ready to captivate others with this game? This is her reasoning, "Life goes by very quickly. As they say, you won't have time to look back... Now your youth plays with all its colours, but then you already have children. The situation is changing — and what seemed important before is no longer important at all now. Yes, it happens like this... Over the years you understand more and more how much people want to live! To be healthy, to love... You also realise how in an instant your usual life can collapse, figuratively speaking, shatter into pieces! And then peace, tranquillity, security, confidence in the future acquire special value. Therefore, while there is an opportunity, I try to weave joy into the fabric of everyday life and give people a chance to come into contact with the beautiful. The desire for it is inherent within us. Beautiful things improve our mood, give us energy... These are music, literature, theatre, paintings. Also nature: it is divine..."

■ And these artefacts, along with a note from the artist, went on a journey around the world



Beautiful birds, animals, ponds, plants, flowers... It's scary to even imagine: instead of what we have, we will suddenly see everywhere ugly and terrible, broken, chaotic, hysterical..."

Forty shades of happiness

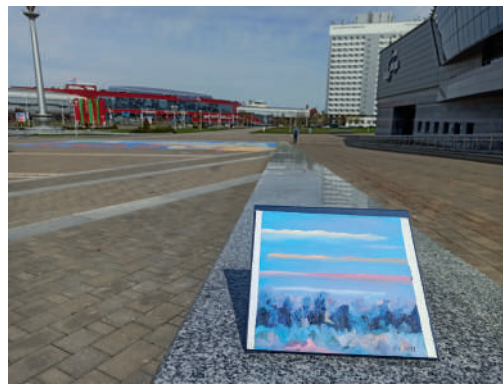
"About forty of my works in glass bottles," says my interlocutor, "were left to the will of fate in different parts of the globe, including in Belarus. Some of them are still

sailing in different seas. Some paintings, artefacts, have been found, others have not yet been found. Let me remind you that one of them drifted for 141 days in a bottle from the island of St. Maarten to the shores of America, then it was found by a company of vacationers with children on a yacht off the coast of Florida on the Atlantic Ocean: in July 2021. The title of the painting is Lots of Work for Bees. The lucky ones were very inspired that such an adventure happened to them, they contacted me through Instagram and... I didn't believe it! They sent photographs as proof, sharing details. This was artefact number 2. They couldn't immediately uncork the bottle because there was no corkscrew on board the yacht, but they were able to see what was inside and read a few words (I wrote in English). During the journey, the bottle



■ The artifact in the bottle visited Australia — in Melbourne





- Artefact Plum Mood on the background of the Kremlin in Moscow
- In Moscow, the artefact Emerald Night was left: on the embankment of Stepan Razin. Before that, the painting 'took a walk' and was photographed in the city near the monument to Alexander Pushkin. The artifact was hidden by the artist's daughter Ekaterina, and on her birthday. Not one, but two notes were left in the bottle with the painting.
- Artefact Charm of Life in Minsk

became overgrown with shells. By the way, we calculated that if it swam directly from one point to another, it would have covered about 2,000 km in free swimming with the help of wind and currents. This news was covered in various Belarusian media..."

It's definitely a big deal to find a collectible painting. And in the art tour show Artefact by Viktoria Valuk, I repeat, the author's works in oil on canvas take part. And only hers! Each is assigned a number and artefact status. All details of the show, such as the name of the artefact, the size of the painting, where it was left, when it was found and by whom, are reflected in the artist's special catalogue. This show has a rule: whoever finds the artefact can keep it absolutely free. And such people already exist!

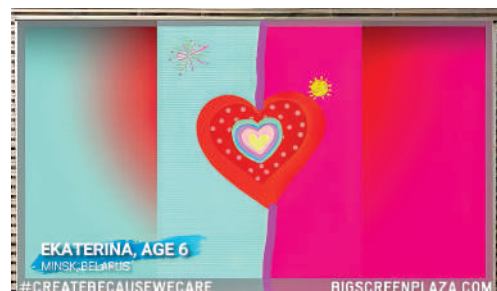
Kaliningrad, Volkovysk, Dobromysli... And where is Tver?

The first artefact after the project started was found in Kaliningrad. "I learned about it from a letter that came to me in the mail with a photo of the miniature. The author of the letter found it when he went fishing. He noticed a bottle in a depression in the ground, it lay upside down. The guy, as he admitted, looked at it for a long time, and when he took it out, he was very surprised..."

Then other lucky ones responded too. For example, the painting-artefact number 22 Thunderstorm is Coming, hidden in Volkovysk, an ancient city in the north-west of Belarus, which is 1,000 years old, was found a long time ago. And a group of friends discovered her. Of course, it was difficult for them to share one painting among everyone, so they asked Viktoria when she would come to Volkovysk and leave more artefacts... "There are a lot of people who want to find a collectible painting-artefact," says Viktoria. But, unfortunately, according to the rules of the art tour show, it is impossible to hide several paintings in one city. Of course, those who discover mini-paintings in bottles are certainly lucky people. After all, finding a collectible painting from a reality show, being in a certain place at a certain hour, encountering the big game — it's like magic."

Another Belarusian city where the artist's artefact was found was an agricultural town with a beautiful name Dobromysli, which is in the Liozno District of the Vitebsk Region. Moreover, literally five minutes after it was left, the artistic message was found. This was in 2022. "It was discovered by a local store salesperson, a wonderful girl named Yelena," says the artist. "Having met her, I saw what a kind person she is!" In the note that I leave along with the

miniature, I always provide my contact information. But not everyone who finds it responds. It's clear. The reasons may be different: they are shy, or do not have an online account, or something else is in the way. Let's say a person gets stuck in an everyday routine. Perhaps, for some reason, the owners want to remain anonymous. For example, I know for sure that a bottle with my painting was found in Warsaw. And in Tver. The sites were checked and the artefacts disappeared a few weeks after they were left. It would be interesting to know what their fate is. Unfortunately, there is not yet such a chip with a long-lasting battery to track, at least approximately, the movement of the canvas. But, I admit, this does not upset me at all. After all, positive emotions probably remain with the one who found the artefact. It doesn't depend on whether I know about it or not."



- Victoria Valuk's daughter Ekaterina also paints, previously participated in children's exhibitions

If you give, it will come back to you

Not everyone can hide an artefact in a special place and leave their name in history forever, Viktoria tells me. She writes about the same thing on social media, "If anyone wants to take part in the show and hide a painting on their own behalf, or on behalf of their company, or even a pet, or acquire the same right for their friends or relatives, please contact me. New artefacts — mini paintings — will bring happiness: both to those who hide them and to those who find them." Their author does not even doubt this. "Remember," she asks, "the song by Stas Namin, performed by the famous rock group Tsvety? There are such wonderful lines: 'We wish you happiness! Happiness in this big world! Like the sun in the morning, let it come into the house!' It is with this mood that I give people my paintings... What brings happiness? Smiles, flowers, compliments, pleasant weather, comfortable housing, delicious food... Our polite, diligent children, wise and caring parents, friends you can rely on, colleagues who will not deceive you, and much, much more. What if all this is missing? You can then begin to surround yourself little by little with what is precious and what brings joy." This is how Viktoria Valuk, who also loves to travel, brings it into the world.

Ducklings from Pollysia yard

She loves life, loves creativity, loves people, family, her children and husband... And she does not hesitate to talk about personal feelings sublimely and poetically, "I love spring and autumn, I also appreciate all the seasons, which are so beautiful in Belarus! I love my city of Minsk, my small homeland — Pollysia, where I spent the summer on a farm with my grandmother Maria. She went through the war, but did not harden her soul. There, in a village in the Gomel Region, I picked up pencils with inspiration... Chickens and ducklings (my grandmother had a large farm) ran around the yard, and I came up with fairy-tale stories with them on sheets of paper in colours. I also thank my other grandmother Fedora for her kindness and courage — she also survived the war as a child. After the war, she walked from the village to Minsk for several days to get a job at a tractor factory and live in the capital. Because of the war, she did not even receive a secondary education, she could not really write or count, but she was an example of caring for everyone. I thank my mother for raising me. She had a difficult fate, she had no time for museums and paintings, and she knew little about art. My father left us when I was 12 years old, unfortunately, forever... I thank life for the fact that such a huge and amazing world of painting has opened

up for me, where you can endlessly mix oil, find new shades, forms, put different meanings into paintings and your

innermost thoughts. This is my air, my outlet. I appreciate my teachers and all the artists who paint pictures and hold exhibitions, they are

inspirations for society, each as an example for me in one way or another. I am constantly learning, constantly striving to improve my level of skill..." Seek and you will find!

Viktoria also left artefacts in Russia: as already mentioned, in Kaliningrad and Tver. Still in Samara. And in Moscow, the Emerald Night artefact was left: on the Stepana Razina embankment. Before this, the painting 'took a walk' and was photographed in the city near the monument to Alexander Pushkin. The artefact was hidden by the artist's daughter Yekaterina, and on her birthday. Not one, but two notes were left in the bottle with the painting. The girl herself, by the way, also draws and has previously participated in children's exhibitions. And she even received an award in the New Artist category for her work Whale of the World at an exhibition in Ecuador. Viktoria said that she is currently preparing new miniature works. She hasn't decided where they will appear yet: the art of artistic diplomacy has no boundaries. But it is obvious that there will be new lucky ones who will become owners of paintings from the Artefact art tour show. For some, this will be an unexpected pleasant event that they can tell their friends, children and even grandchildren about. And someone will begin to become more interested in the art of painting, or begin to collect their own collection of paintings. And, most likely, every owner, if he has not heard anything about Belarus, will be curious: where is this country located. And he finds out about it because on the back of each artefact there is a signature — along with the name of the painting, technique, size and number, it is indicated that its author is an artist from Belarus.

Let's wish Viktoria Valuk — and her artefacts — successful travels in the big Ocean of Coincidences, which, as we know, are actually patterns that we simply do not know about. Perhaps for the time being.

Valentina Zhdanovich

Photo from the archive of Viktoria Valuk

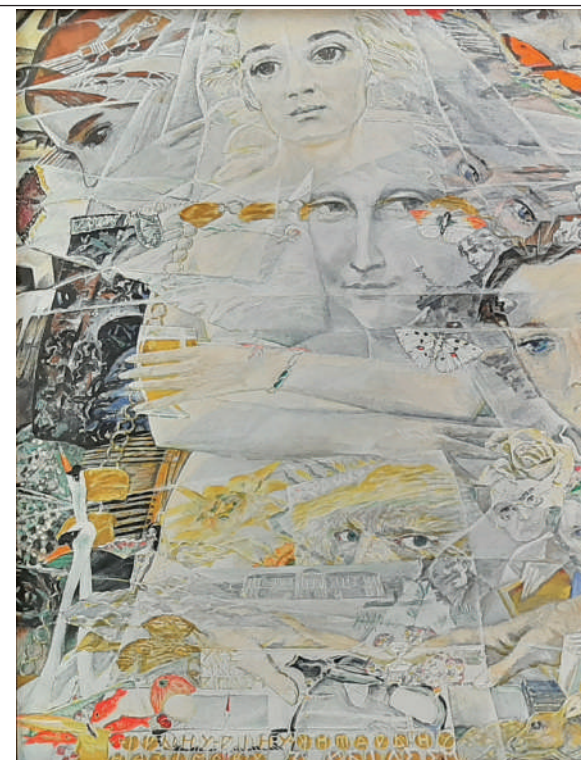


COUNTRY AND PEOPLE IN THE WORK OF THE MASTER



Exhibition Vladimir Stelmashonok. Sons of the Belarusian Land, which has been on display at the National Art Museum for three months now, is dedicated to the 95th anniversary of the birth of the People's Artist of Belarus, teacher Vladimir Ivanovich Stelmashonok

LEGACY THAT NEVER FADES



Vladimir Stelmashonok is a well-known painter in the country and far beyond its borders, who made a significant contribution to the formation and development of modern fine art, enriching it with bright artistic discoveries and innovative solutions. Even if the artist had painted only the famous portrait of Yakub Kolas in a wide-brimmed straw hat, he would still have become famous. Stelmashonok painted the poet from life. However, Vladimir Ivanovich was also familiar with another classic of Belarusian literature, Yanka Kupala, whose portrait he also created.

The image of his native Belarus runs like a red thread through all the work of Vladimir Stelmashonok. The artist repeatedly turns to the glorious pages of its history. The master creates a gallery of memorable portraits of outstanding people — historical figures, his contemporaries.

In search of an expressive style

The anniversary exhibition demonstrates the artist's skill in the field of easel painting. All works are presented from the collection of the National Art Museum. Although the entire creative heritage of Vladimir Stelmashonok includes not only painting, but also monumental art, graphics and scenography.

In the 1950s, the young artist's paintings were still done in the traditional realistic manner. In the 1960s, Vladimir Stelmashonok began to experiment, developing his bright, unique artistic style within the framework of the 'strict style'. In search of an artistic language and new means of expression to create his works, he combines painting with wood carving, collage, appliqué, and actively uses traditional Belarusian folk ornaments, often weaving text into it. The images embodied by the artist acquire a monumental and decorative character.

Despite the general stylistic unity, each work by Vladimir Stelmashonok has its own distinctly individual solution and bears the master's original signature. It is interesting to recall the long history of the twenties of the last century with Lenin's campaign in the country's artistic forge — the Moscow VKHUTEMAS (Higher Art and Technical

Workshops) and what it turned out to be for art. The decree on its formation was signed by V. I. Ulyanov (Lenin) on November 29th, 1920. The following year — 1921 — the head of the Soviet state found both the opportunity and the desire to get acquainted personally with the new institution, and most importantly, with the life and direction of thoughts of its students. Several works of fine art and even a feature film were dedicated to this event.

A kind of 'time machine' to look into the early years of the existence of the young Soviet republic will be for us the painting by People's Artist of Belarus Vladimir



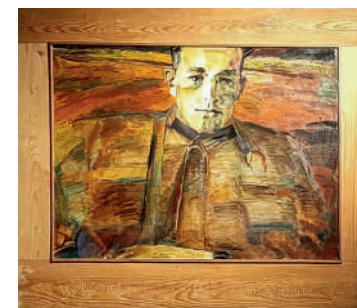


Stelmashonok *VKHUTEMAS*. 1921. He created it in 1967, when the so-called 'strict style' was born and formed in the art of the 60s. Stelmashonok just used some techniques characteristic of this style. His painting depicts a group of serious young people together with a smiling Lenin. The hungry and cold first years of Soviet power were characterised by a huge emotional upsurge, the desire of young people for heights of spirit, and incredible optimism. The composition of the picture is extremely simple, but harsh and, as a result, tense. Nine people stand motionless and look at the viewer from a conditional space limited by the canvas frame. Vladimir Stelmashonok placed 'halos' over some of them, perhaps hinting at further twists and turns in their destinies. Lenin considered art a matter of national importance, but he came to the commune to join young aspiring artists for another reason. Together with Krupskaya, on February 25th, 1921, they visited Inessa Armand's youngest daughter, Varvara, in the VKHUTEMAS student dormitory. In the USSR, in the late 60s, the film *Strokes to the Portrait of V.I. Lenin* was made in 4 parts, one of which was entirely devoted to this meeting with future artists. And besides the picturesque work of Vladimir Stelmashonok, there is another interesting artefact that is kept in the State Historical Museum of Moscow — a woven tapestry with the leader, Nadezhda Krupskaya and members of the student commune at a modest meal. It is interesting to compare two works on the same topic. What speaks more to our contemporary

today: the imaginary situation in Stelmashonok's painting or an everyday scene made in textiles? One thing is clear: the stylised painting of the Belarusian artist, as if allegorically, reveals its subtext, its depth. We ourselves must figure out and understand what the artist's "statement" is about.



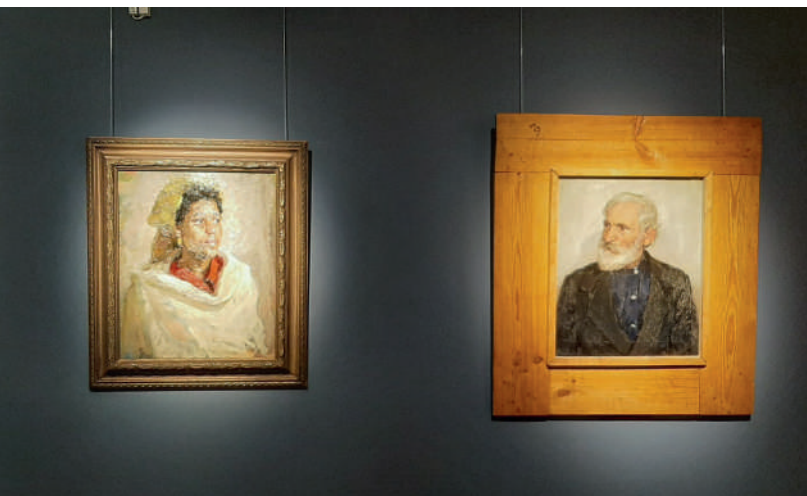
Vladimir Stelmashonok was born on February 6th, 1928 in Minsk. He graduated from the Ilya Repin Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in Leningrad. For more than 40 years, from 1957 to 2000, he taught at the Belarusian Academy of Arts.



The wealth of the Belarusian land

Yes, the range of the artist's creativity is great. This is not only easel and monumental painting, graphics, but also scenography, decorative art. The master's works are well known to every Minsk resident: his stained glass still attracts the attention of visitors to the Fashion House, and beautiful mosaics adorn the Moskovskaya and Ploshchad Pobedy metro stations. And, by the way, the stained glass window of Vladimir Stelmashonok is placed on one of the buildings in the German city of Potsdam. However, of all the genres of fine art, the artist still gives preference to portraiture. Stelmashonok's famous painting *The Story of Belarus* depicts outstanding figures of Belarusian national history and culture: Euphrosyne of Polotsk, Kirill Turovsky, Francysk Skaryna, Symon Budny, Pyotr Mstislavets, Simeon Polotsky, Frantisek Bogushevich, Kastus Kalinovsky, Aloisa Pashkevich (Tsetka), Maksim Bagdanovich, Yakub Kolas, Yanka Kupala, Tishka Gartny, Vladislav Golubok. The artist created this composition

more than 40 years ago, and it still remains a classic, thanks to the organic combination of monumentality with depth and ambiguity of meaning. It should be noted that Vladimir Stelmashonok's paintings were exhibited in various countries; a significant part of the paintings is kept in the National Art Museum of Belarus. In 2006, the artist's gallery was opened in the regional centre of Osipovichi, Mogilev Region. Stelmashonok was glorified, however, not only by portraits of prominent figures of national culture. He also painted very willingly his contemporaries, ordinary Belarusians. For the artist's anniversary, the National Art Museum



took out from the storerooms all the master's paintings in its collections. The exhibition *Vladimir Stelmashonok. Sons of the Belarusian Land* presents 22 paintings from those belonging to the museum. 23. The famous portrait of Yakub Kolas by Vladimir Ivanovich Stelmashonok was decided not to be disturbed: the painting remained in the main exhibition. The curator of the exhibition, senior researcher at the department of Belarusian art of the 20th-21st centuries, Anastasia Karneiko, noted, "The sons of the Belarusian land are both the artist's contemporaries and, in general, all the predecessors who became the pride of Belarus. The image of his native country runs like a red thread through all of Vladimir Ivanovich's work. He repeatedly turned to the glorious pages of our history, thereby creating a gallery



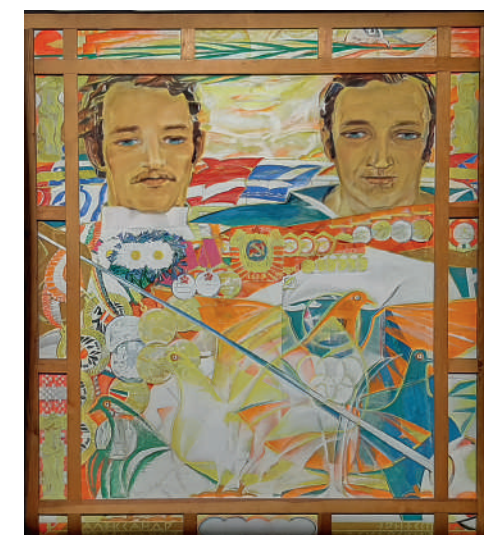
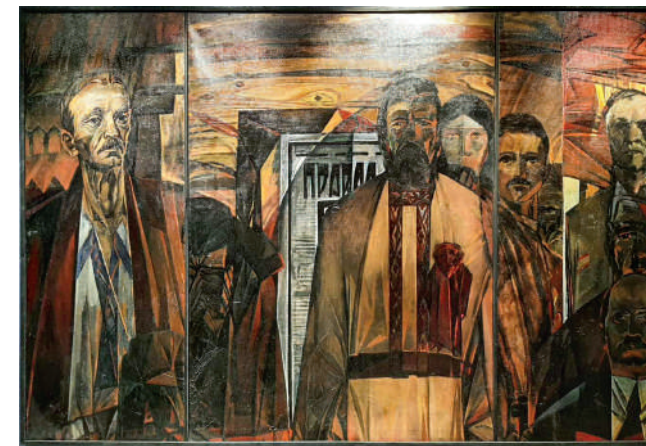
of memorable portraits of outstanding people — historical figures and his contemporaries."

A look at yourself

Of course, being an excellent portrait painter, Stelmashonok was able to masterfully convey character, facial expressions, gestures, capturing the emotional state of a person. At the exhibition you can see the master's early, student works: *Portrait of an Old Man*, *Girl* and *Portrait of a Student*. All painted in 1950.

The diploma work of the future national artist, *Young Builders of Minsk* of 1957, is also kept in the collection of the National Art Museum. At the current anniversary exhibition, this bright, cheerful painting took its rightful place, revealing the enormous talent of the then just beginning artist.

However, the latest painting by Vladimir Stelmashonok, available in the museum's collections, is dated 1993. This is *Self-Portrait* — the artist's view of himself through the prism of the years he has lived and the deeds he has accomplished. Unfortunately, there are no later works by Vladimir Ivanovich in the National Art Museum, but they can be found in the collections of other museums. For example, in the Mogilev Regional Art Museum or in the same art gallery in Osipovichy, which today bears the name of Vladimir Stelmashonok. The fact is that the Osipovichy District is the small homeland of the artist's father and grandfather. Vladimir Ivanovich always treated these places with special reverence, so he donated a lot of works to the local museum.



Ability to create an image

Yes, Stelmashonok's biography is the most classic for a painter born in Minsk in the late 1920s. After studying for a year at the Polytechnic Institute, he, like many Belarusian masters, went to Leningrad to receive an art education. He Graduated from the Painting Department of the Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture. And then — admission to the Union of Artists of the BSSR, republican and all-Union exhibitions, foreign... Twice Vladimir Stelmashonok was elected chairman of the Union of Artists of the BSSR. He did not avoid public life; he was friends with many prominent figures of Russian culture.

While still a student, the artist was lucky enough to make several full-scale sketches of the national poet of Belarus Yakub Kolas. It is known that in 1952, having arrived on vacation in his native Minsk, sophomore Volodya Stelmashonok met the Mitskevich family. Communication began, and Konstantin Mikhailovich invited the young painter to paint his portrait. Each time the poet wore a suit with medals and orders, and a badge of a deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. Unfortunately, this work survives only in black and white photography. In subsequent years, after comprehending the creative and social scale of the work of the great poet-countryman, Vladimir Stelmashonok created three more portraits of Yakub Kolas, including the

most famous, expressive and laconic — the one where the national poet is depicted in a peasant shirt and a wide hat (this work is on permanent display at the National Museum of Art). Art critics joke that even if Vladimir Stelmashonok painted only this one picture, he would still become famous.

So, the anniversary exhibition at the National Art Museum focuses primarily on the artist's portraiture. The museum's collection also includes his drawings — there are more than 90 of them. All the paintings presented in the exhibition and painted by the artist over the years are unusual in that they allow you to see the subjects of the portraits from an unusual perspective.

Veniamin **Mikheyev**

LIFE IN MINIATURE



About 70 works of small porcelain sculpture from the collections of the National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus, created in the twentieth century at the Leningrad Lomonosov Porcelain Factory, the Volkhov Porcelain and Earthenware Factory, the Dmitrov Porcelain Factory, the Dulevo and Minsk Porcelain Factories, are presented at the exhibition of the same name

A monument to a bygone time

So, the legendary Soviet porcelain is exhibited in Minsk. It is worth recalling that small or tabletop porcelain sculptures played a significant role in the everyday cultural life of the USSR. In the 1950s—1960s, a state programme was created to improve the well-being of the people. The spiritual life of Soviet society is filled with ideas of harmonious development of personality, education of a new taste, aesthetic transformation of the environment, and the creation of cities and dwellings of a new type. Changes in public life open up new prospects for the development of architecture and closely related substantive creativity. Sculpture of small forms becomes one of the important elements of the interior of a typical Soviet apartment, a symbol of home comfort and warmth. Interior porcelain plastic reflects the tastes of the owner, his range of interests, aesthetic preferences, conveys the flavour of the time, the nature of social life.





The country's porcelain enterprises were actively involved in the process of shaping the everyday culture of Soviet people: figurines with clear and recognizable images were produced in mass quantities. A unique set of themes and subjects emerged that the masters chose for their work: heroes of literary works, theatre and circus, 'pictures from everyday life', the world of childhood. Soviet large-circulation porcelain can be called a notable phenomenon of art of the twentieth century. Currently,



it still attracts the attention of researchers and collectors, being a kind of monument to a bygone time.

Legends of Soviet porcelain

Yes, at the exhibition you can see not only porcelain chess sets of the early Soviets, but also the famous 'Gogol series' of the Soviet sculptor Boris Vorobyov, who went down in art history as a 'translator' of the works of Alexander Pushkin, Ivan Krylov, Mikhail Lermontov and Anton Chekhov into porcelain.

All exhibits in the exhibition are from the storerooms of the National Art Museum; the 'Belarusian' Soviet porcelain collection was donated to the museum by



Porcelain Factory. Yes, at the exhibition you can see not only porcelain chess of the early Soviets, but also the famous "Gogol series" by the Soviet sculptor Boris Vorobyov, who went down in art history as a "translator" into the porcelain language of the works of Alexander Pushkin, Ivan Krylov

the Minsk Porcelain Factory. In other words, here are presented works of small porcelain sculptures that were created in the 20s — 60s of the last century. These porcelain miniatures were embodied at the Leningrad Lomonosov Porcelain Factory, the Volkhov Porcelain and Earthenware Factory, the Dmitrov Porcelain Factory, the Dulevo and Minsk Porcelain Factories.

'Red and White' chess

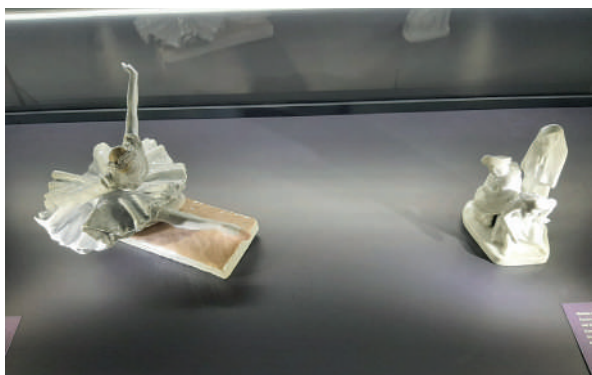
One of the most interesting exhibits of the exhibition is the porcelain chess set of the talented Soviet ceramist Natalya Danko Red and White, which was created in 1922 at the Leningrad Porcelain Factory. They were produced over several years and were only used for export and as gifts to party leaders of the young country of the Soviets. The Red and White chess set is one of the most famous examples of Soviet propaganda porcelain. The 'white pawn in chains' is in particular demand among modern collectors.

Porcelain animals

At the exhibition you can see several of the most famous animalistic works by talented Soviet artists Boris Vorobyov and Ivan Riznich. They were made in the 30—60s of the last century. These are Howling Wolf, Crouching Fox, Greyhound, Lying Tiger, Panther (Fury). Vorobyov's



ORIGINAL EXHIBITION



Porcelain Animals, painted by Riznich, were exhibited at the most prestigious auctions and purchased by many museums around the world.

Gogol series

The sculptor Vorobyov is called the ‘translator’ of the works of Pushkin, Krylov, Lermontov and, of course, Gogol into porcelain language. At the exhibition Life in Miniature there are literary characters from Dead Souls and The Government Inspector — Khlestakov, Bobchinsky and Dobchinsky, Korobochka. The figurines are made with such skill that we recognise contemporaries in Gogol’s characters. The hero of Krylov’s fable The Cat and the Cook also has expressive character. The author depicted a moment that corresponds to the catchphrase from the fable — ‘And Vaska listens and eats’.



The exhibition also includes the hero of Leo Tolstoy’s story — the touching little boy Phillipok, who really wanted to go to school.

Clown and Malachite Box

The image of the young heroine of Pavel Bazhov’s story The Malachite Box is also filled with lyricism and spontaneity — it captures the moment when the girl tries on expensive jewellery. At the exhibition you can also see a rare interior sculpture Clown with Balloons — it is bright, elegant and sparkling.

Belarusian Soviet porcelain is presented in a separate room — it is younger — this is the 50-60s of the last century. A collection of porcelain sculptures was donated to the National Art Museum of Belarus by the Minsk Porcelain Factory. Here are Symon the Musician, and The Frog Princess, and genre figures in national costumes.

Inspection with music

An elegant feature of the exhibition is its musical and sound design — during the exhibition you can hear the song of a lone wolf, as well as the sound of the pike from the fairy tale At the Pike’s Command beating its tail. To hear everything, you just need to stand in silence for 15 minutes.

Aleksey Yemelyanov



ГОЛАС РАДЗІМЫ | Весткі з Беларусі



СТВАРАЕЦА АДЗІНАЯ КУЛЬТУРНАЯ ПРАСТОРА



Урачыстае адкрыццё Дзён культуры Расіі ў Беларусі прайшло ў Брэсце. Мэта мерапрыемства – умацаванне культурных сувязяў паміж краінамі. У рамках мерапрыемства міністэрствы культуры Расіі і Беларусі правялі сумеснае пасяджэнне калегій, на якое акрамя кіраўнікоў ведамстваў былі запрошаны супрацоўнікі міністэрстваў, якія адказваюць за рэалізацыю сумесных праграм, і дзеячы культуры дзвюх краін. Перад пасяджэннем прадстаўнічая дэлегацыя наведвала мемарыяльны комплекс “Брэцкая крэпасць – герой”, дзе кіраўнікі ведамстваў абедзвюх краін ушанавалі памяць пра ўдзельнікаў Вялікай Айчыннай вайны і ўсклалі кветкі да вечнага агню. У пасяджэнні калегій міністэрстваў культуры Расіі і Беларусі ўзяў удзел Дзяржаўны сакратар Саюзнай дзяржавы Дзмітрый Мезенцаў. Ён адзначыў, што менавіта ў культурнай галіне рэалізуюцца праекты, якія найбольш спрыяюць збліжэнню народаў.



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■ Захаванне гістарычнай праўды і памяці пра подзвіг савецкага народа ў гады Вялікай Айчыннай вайны – адна з галоўных тэм, на якую звярнулі ўвагу ўдзельнікі пасяджэння.

На пасяджэнні была абмеркавана праграма супрацоўніцтва да 2025 года, вызначаны асноўныя яе кірункі і праекты, сярод якіх – правядзенне фестываляў, выставак, гастролі маладзёжнага расійска-беларускага сімфанічнага аркестра, выступленні тэатральнымі калектываў, стварэнне лічбавай бібліятэкі Саюзнай дзяржавы. Уздымалася пытанне і аб развіцці кінематаграфічнай галіны. У прыватнасці, беларускі бок прапанаваў распачаць сумесны ваенна-патрыятычны кінапраект, прымеркаваны да 80-годдзя Перамогі. У сваю чаргу міністр культуры Расійскай Федэрацыі Вольга Любімава папрасіла распрацаваць агульны план мерапрыемстваў, звязаных з памятнай датай. Захаванне гістарычнай праўды і памяці пра подзвіг савецкага народа ў гады Вялікай Айчыннай вайны – адна з галоўных тэм, на якую звярнулі ўвагу ўдзельнікі пасяджэння. Дзмітрый Мезенцаў паабяцаў падтрымку патрыятычных праектаў, звязаных са святкаваннем 80-годдзя вызвалення Беларусі. Так, будзе працягнута праца па музейфікацыі, рэстаўрацыі аб'ектаў Брэсцкай крэпасці, на што закладзеныя адпаведныя сродкі ў праекце саюзнага бюджэта. Як паведаміў дзяржсакратар, саюжны бюджэт павялічаны на 38 працэнтаў, што будзе садзейнічаць павелічэнню колькасці мерапрыемстваў культурна-гуманітарнай і патрыятычнай накіраванасці. Так, запланавана правядзенне кадэцкай маладзёжнай

змены, спартакіяд, мерапрыемстваў, звязаных з памятнымі мясцінамі, бітвамі і подзвігамі Вялікай Айчыннай вайны.

У наступным годзе ў серыі “Бібліятэка саюзнай дзяржавы” пачаюць свет кніга, прысвечная партызанскаму руху. У ёй будуць прадстаўлены ў тым ліку і новыя факты злачынстваў фашыстаў, здзейсненыя ў гады вайны на тэрыторыі Беларусі і Расіі.

Яшчэ адна дата, якой будзе нададзена ўвага ў наступным годзе – 25-годдзе падпісання Саюзнага дагавору. Да яе плануецца рэалізаваць новыя ідэі і праекты. Патрыятычнае выхаванне моладзі, фарміраванне адзінай культурна-асветніцкай прасторы – вось тэмы, узгодненыя з дарожнай картай. У Саюзнай дзяржаве вялікае значэнне надаецца пошуку маладых талентаў. Адна з ідэй, якую агучыў Дзмітрый Мезенцаў, – зацвярджэнне прэміі ў галіне літаратуры і мастацтва менавіта для маладых творчых асоб.

У рамках дзён культуры Расіі ў Брэсцкім акадэмічным тэатры драмы з вялікай канцэртнай праграмай выступіў Дзяржаўны камерны аркестр джазавай музыкі імя Алега Лунстрэма. Госці прадставілі папулярныя кампазіцыі і песні савецкіх, расійскіх і замежных кампазітараў.

Яўген **Кручкоў**

НЕ АБЫСЦІСЯ БЕЗ ТРАНСФАРМАЦЫІ



фота А. Дзязюля

У Нацыянальнай бібліятэцы Беларусі прайшоў X Міжнародны кангрэс “Бібліятэка як феномен культуры”. Сёлета ён сабраў 420 дэлегатаў з дзесяці краін: Азербайджана, Арменіі, Інданезіі, Казахстана, Кітая, Кыргызстана, Расіі, Таджыкістана і Узбекістана. Сярод удзельнікаў кангрэса былі кіраўнікі і спецыялісты буйнейшых бібліятэк, музеяў, выдвецтваў, навукова-даследчых арганізацый і ўстаноў адукацыі, вытворцы праграмага забеспячэння, тэхнічных сродкаў, інфармацыйнай прадукцыі і прамысловага абсталявання для бібліятэк.

Арганізатарамі маштабнага мерапрыемства выступілі Міністэрства культуры і Міністэрства інфармацыі Беларусі, Міждзяржаўны фонд гуманітарнага супрацоўніцтва дзяржаў – удзельніц СНД і Беларуская бібліятэчная асацыяцыя.

Намеснік міністра інфармацыі Ігар Бузоўскі на адкрыцці кангрэса гаварыў аб тым, якая вялікая ўвага сёння надаецца распаўсюджванню інфармацыі і кнігі, як

узрасце роля бібліятэк у фарміраванні менталітэту і выхаванні падрастаючага пакалення.

Вітальны адрас удзельнікам прадстаўнічай сустрэчы даслаў і прэм’ер-міністр Рэспублікі Беларусь Раман Галоўчанка. Ён назваў работнікаў бібліятэк захавальнікамі інтэлектуальнага багацця краіны. Сапраўды, сёння бібліятэкі не толькі збіраюць і захоўваюць друкаваную і рукапісную спадчыну, але

і выступаюць папулярызатарамі ведаў. Пра тое, як гэта ажыццяўляецца, якія інавацыйныя праграмы рэалізуюцца, што робіцца для павышэння прафесійных кампетэнцый, і вялася гаворка падчас форуму. Вызначалася месца сучасных бібліятэк у лічбавым свеце, абмяркоўваліся інфармацыйныя бібліятэчныя тэхналогіі ў эпоху вялікіх даных, пытанні захавання фондаў і новыя задачы, якія стаяць перад работнікамі галіны.

Дырэктар фундаментальнай бібліятэкі БДУ, старшыня савета Беларускай бібліятэчнай асацыяцыі Уладзімір Кулажанка адзначыў, што юбілейны бібліятэчны кангрэс прымеркаваны да Года міру і стваральнай працы. І менавіта бібліятэкі адыгрываюць не малую ролю ў развіцці нацыянальнай культуры, адукацыі, навукі. Патрэбна не забываць пра вельмі важную функцыю бібліятэк – выхаваўчую, бо тыя каштоўнасці, якія неабходна прывіваць моладзі, ёсць у добрых кнігах. Таму сёння перад кніжнымі скарбніцамі стаяць задачы па наладжванні камунікацый паміж грамадствам і добрай літаратурай.

Удзельнікі кангрэсу абмеркавалі і праблемныя пытанні, якія сталі асабліва актуальнымі ў наш час. Дырэктар Нацыянальнай бібліятэкі Беларусі Вадзім Гігін узгадаў такое паняцце, як культура адмены. Раней, у 90-х гадах, калі такая з’ява пачала развівацца, назіраўся культурны байкот асобных дзеячаў, артыстаў, пісьмennisкаў. Сёння пад культурай адмены разумеецца адмова для культур цэлых краін і народаў. Вадзім Гігін узгадаў і пра так званыя мяккі таталітарызм: “Ён заключаецца ў панаванні паліткарэктнасці, а па сутнасці ў дыктаце пэўных ідэялагічных каштоўнасцяў над пастулатамі культуры. Гэта замоўчванне, байкот, зыход ад тых ці іншых тэм, прасоўванне аўтараў на прэміі, фестывалі, папулярызацыя не на аснове культурнай значнасці, а на адпаведнасці той ці іншай ідэалогіі. Крытыка, якая разгарнулася вакол Нобелеўскай прэміі, – яскравы прыклад дэвальвацыі ранейшых інстытутаў і пастулатаў”. Таму ў наш час трэба надаваць асаблівую ўвагу культурнай дыпламатыі, менавіта яна здольная наводзіць масты, аб’ядноўваць людзей. І тут не абыйсціся без трансфармацыі бібліятэк. Сёння яны павінны ператварыцца ў палаты культуры, як шматфункцыянальныя інстытуты, якія садзейнічаюць назапашванню і распаўсюджванню ведаў.

Генеральны дырэктар Прэзідэнцкай бібліятэкі імя Б. Ельцына Юрий Носаў падзяліўся вопытам работы з вучнёўскай моладдзю. Так у гэтым годзе старшакласнікі ў Расіі пачалі вучыцца па адзіным падручніку гісторыі. Гэтае выданне незвычайнае:

праз QR-коды, якія падаюцца на яго старонках, вучні і настаўнікі падключаюцца да інфармацыйных рэсурсаў Прэзідэнцкай бібліятэкі, могуць знаёміцца з разнастайнымі дакументамі, працаваць з даставярнымі крыніцамі.



■ Дырэктар Нацыянальнай бібліятэкі Беларусі Вадзім Гігін

Створаны лічбавы кантэнт і па іншых прадметах і тэмах школьнай праграмы. Усе матэрыялы прайшлі экспертызы на конт магчымасці выкарыстання іх у адукацыйным працэсе. Сярод спецыяльна адабраных матэрыялаў – архіўныя дакументы, рытэтныя выданні, фатаграфіі, лістоўкі, паштоўкі. Таксама ў сценах бібліятэкі створаныя відэалекцыі. Яна мае тэлевізійны і мультымедыйны комплексы. На яе базе праводзяцца мультымедыйныя ўрокі, алімпіяды і конкурсы вучнёўскіх работ, відэалекторыі, кінапаказы, канцэрты. Сёння Прэзідэнцкая бібліятэка з’яўляецца ўжо культурна-асветніцкім, навукова-адукацыйным і інфармацыйна-аналітычным цэнтрам.

Адзін з пастаянных удзельнікаў Міжнароднага бібліятэчнага кангрэса – Расійская нацыянальная бібліятэка. Яе дырэктар Уладзімір Гронскі прапанаваў калегам з Беларусі новыя тэмы для даследаванняў. Сёння, калі шмат гаворыцца пра неабходнасць абароны традыцыйных каштоўнасцяў, самабытнай

культуры і гістарычнай памяці, важна знаходзіць і папулярываць інфармацыйныя крыніцы. У Расійскай нацыянальнай бібліятэцы маюцца ўнікальныя матэрыялы, звязаныя з культурай і гісторыяй Беларусі. Напрыклад, там захоўваецца кніжны помнік XII стагоддзя – Полацкае Евангелле, а таксама адзін з самых поўных у свеце збораў кніг



Француска Скарыны. Але гэтым разам Уладзімір Гронскі прапанаваў звярнуць увагу на матэрыялы яшчэ маладаследаваныя і нават невядомыя. У фондах Расійскай нацыянальнай бібліятэкі захоўваюцца фатаграфіі, якія адлюстроўваюць жыццё Беларусі ў канцы XIX пачатку XX стагоддзяў. Гэта два альбомы здымкаў па этнаграфіі Магілёўскай губерні, зробленыя ў 1904-1903 гадах студэнтам Пецярбургскага ўніверсітэта Вячаславам Косткам. Матэрыялы, якія ён сабраў падчас экспедыцыі ў якасці карэспандэнта этнаграфічнага аддзела Рускага музея, знаходзяцца ў Санкт-Пецярбурзе (у мясцовых музеях). Дарэчы, з экспедыцыі малады даследчык прыехаў не толькі

з фатаграфіямі, але і з калекцыяй мужчынскай і жаночай вопраткі, узорами тканін, рэчамі хатняга побыту.

У фондах Расійскай нацыянальнай бібліятэкі таксама захваліся здымкі, зробленыя ў 1898 годзе пісьменнікам і перакладчыкам, географам, этнографам Міхаілам Крукоўскім. Яны не ўведзеныя ў навуковы зварот і ўяўляюць вялікую цікавасць для вывучэння. Гэтую калекцыю з трох альбомаў і 258 фатаграфій варта было б зрабіць даступнай для шырокага кола даследчыкаў, таму прагучала прапанова аб яе выданні. Таксама Расійская нацыянальная бібліятэка гатовая да супрацоўніцтва ў праектах па факсімільным узнёўленні кніжных помнікаў XVII–XIX стагоддзя, якія сведчаць пра культурныя кантакты паміж краінамі ў розныя перыяды. Дарэчы, адзін з праектаў гэтай установы, які рэалізуецца ўжо на працягу 30 гадоў, прысвечаны Беларусі. Гэта краязнаўчая канферэнцыя, на якой абмяркоўваюцца крыніцы, звязаныя з беларускай культурай.

У рамках форуму прайшлі пленарнае і секцыйныя пасяджэнні, прэзентацыі, круглыя сталы, выстаўка выдавецкай прадукцыі. А таксама ў музеі кнігі Нацыянальнай бібліятэкі адкрылася выстаўка “Кніжныя скарбы Куцеінскага манастыра”, прымеркаваная да 400 – годдзя з дня заснавання на Віцебшчыне Свята-Багаўўленскага храма. У XVII стагоддзі ён стаў адным з буйнейшых асветніцкіх цэнтраў. Пры гэтым праваслаўным манастыры ў 1654-1630 гады працавала друкарня, дзе выдавалася навукова-асветніцкая, царкоўна-палемічная і свецкая літаратура на царкоўнаславянскай і старабеларускай мовах. У гэтай друкарні пад Оршай у 1631 годзе выйшаў і буквар Спірыдона Собаля. Арыгінала старажытнага падручніка, на жаль, у Беларусі няма, але на выставе можна пабачыць факсімільнае выданне буквара, здзейсненае ў 2014 годдзе.

У музеі кнігі экспануецца рукапісны помнік – Сінодзік Куцеінскага манастыра XVIII стагоддзя, узор перакладной літаратуры «Гісторыя пра Варлаама і Іасафа», «Актоіх Іаана Дамаскіна», адно з чудаўных літургічных выданняў «Трэфалагіён» і іншыя экспанаты. Прадстаўлены шэраг кірылічных выданняў і рукапісаў XVII-XVIII стагоддзяў з запісамі Куцеінскага манастыра. Сярод іх – рукапісныя ноты «Ірмалогій» XVII стагоддзя, маскоўскія і кіеўскія богаслужэбныя старадаўнія гравюры. Таксама змешчаны дакументы, звязаныя з гісторыяй Куцеінскага манастыра.

Ганна **Пятрова**
Фота Лізаветы Голад

“ЗВЯЗДУ” НАВЕДАЎ МУРМАНСКІ ПІСЬМЕННІК

**У госці ў Выдавецкі
дом “Звязда”
наведаўся пісьменнік з
Мурманскай вобласці
Аляксандр Рыжоў**



Нагадаем, што ў 1998 годзе, пасля візіта Прэзідэнта Рэспублікі Беларусь Аляксандра Лукашэнкі ў Мурманск, у сталіцы нашай краіны былі праведзены першыя Дні Мурманскай вобласці ў Рэспубліцы Беларусь. Удзел у мерапрыемствах іх праграмы бралі і запалярныя пісьменнікі. “Тады мне давялося пазнаёміцца з Віталем Маславым, Марынай Чыстаногавай, а таксама Надзеяй Бальшакавай, – падзяліўся на сустрэчы з Аляксандрам Рыжовым старшыня Саюза пісьменнікаў Беларусі, кіраўнік Выдавецкага дома “Звязда” Алесь Карлюкевіч. – Дарэчы, тая сустрэча прынесла і свой плён. Калі мы рыхтавалі кнігу “Францыск Скарына на мовах народаў свету”, праз мурманскіх пісьменнікаў да супрацоўніцтва прыцягнулі саамскую перакладчыцу Аляксандру Антонову. Яна пераклала на сваю родную мову ўрывак са скарынаўскай прадмовы да кнігі “Юдзіф”...”

У 1997 і 2018 гг. праз Беларусь праходзіў маршрут культурнай экспедыцыі “Славянскі ход”, арганізаваны мурманскімі пісьменнікамі.

Паэт і празаік Аляксандр Рыжоў раскажаў пра сённяшні стан развіцця Мурманскай арганізацыі Саюза пісьменнікаў Расіі, пра тыя мерапрыемствы культурна-асветніцкага характару, якія ладзяцца ў Запаляр’і і якія маглі б стаць добрай інтэграцыйнай творчай пляцоўкай для літаратараў Беларусі і Расіі. У прыватнасці, размова ішла пра ўдзел літаратурнай моладзі ў форуме-фестывалі паэтычнай песні і літаратуры малых формаў “Капітан Грэй”, які ўжо стаў візітоўкай Мурманска. Алесь Карлюкевіч прапанаваў распрацаваць і заключыць Пагадненне аб супрацоўніцтве паміж Саюзам пісьменнікаў Беларусі і Мурманскай арганізацыяй Саюза пісьменнікаў Расіі. Аляксандр Рыжоў, дарэчы, толькі што выдаў у Мінску ў выдавецтве “Четыре четверти” сваю кнігу дэтэктыўных гісторый «Призрак Заратустры». Удзел у сустрэчы ў “Звяздзе” прыняла і мінскі кнігавыдавец, член Саюза пісьменнікаў Беларусі Ліліяна Анцух.

Сяргей Шычко



МАРЫЙСКІМ ЧЫТАЧАМ АДРАСУЕЦЦА

**У Ёшкар-Але падрыхтавана да выдання кніга
беларускай дзіцячай прозы ў перакладзе на
марыйскую мову. Праект рыхтаваўся на працягу
некалькіх гадоў.**

Расказвае перакладчык твораў беларускіх аўтараў марыйскі празаік, публіцыст і драматург Юрый Салаўёў, які і ў Беларусі гасцяваў, і не аднойчы прымаў удзел у розных мерапрыемствах беларускіх і замежных пісьменнікаў, якія даволі часта праводзяцца ў розных фармацях – як з непасрэднымі жывымі выступленнямі суразмоўцаў, так і ў фармаце анлайн:

– У нашай рэспубліцы ў апошнія гады склаліся добрыя кантакты з беларускімі пісьменнікамі. Старонкі нашага аўтарытэтнага літаратурна-мастацкага часопіса “Ончыко” сістэмна, з года ў год, прадстаўляюцца перакладам з беларускай паэзіі і прозы. У сучаснай марыйскай літаратуры сфарміравалася каманда руплівых перакладчыкаў – Ігар Папоў, Генадзь Аяр, Святлана Грыгор’ева, Анатоль Ціміркаеў. І вельмі рады, што і я – таксама ў гэтай аўтарытэтнай кагорце. За мінулыя гады “Ончыко”, іншыя выданні надрукавалі вершы і апавяданні Алеся Бадака, Валерыя Казакова, Кастуся Турко, Васіля Сахарчука, Віктара Шніпа, Людмілы Рублеўскай і іншых паэтаў і празаікаў. Гэта своеасаблівы працяг тых перакладчыцкіх памкненняў, якія ажыццяўляліся марыйскімі мастакамі слова ў 1960-1990-я гады. У свой час у Ёшкар-Але выйшла кніга вершаў “Сто паэтаў”. Перакладчыкі – Макс Майн, Іван Осмі, Барыс Данілаў. З беларускіх паэтаў у кнізе прадстаўлены вершы Янкі Купалы, Якуба Коласа, Петруся Броўкі. У газетах і часопісах на марыйскай мове былі надрукаваны творы народных паэтаў Якуба Коласа, Янкі Купалы, Петруся Броўкі, Максіма Танка, Аркадзя Куляшова,

Рыгора Барадуліна, аўтарытэтных мастакоў слова Еўдакіі Лось, Івана Калесніка.

У новы анталогічны зборнік, які ўклаў Юрый Салаўёў, увайшлі мастацкія здабыткі Генадзя Аўласенкі, Алеся Бадака, Раісы Баравіковай, Аляксея Дударова, Анатоля Зэкава, Клаўдзіі Каліны, Уладзіміра Караткевіча, Паўла Місько, Пятра Рунца, Кацярыны Хадасевіч-Лісавой і іншых вядомых беларускіх пісьменнікаў.

Мяркуюцца, што ў Беларусі ў сваю чаргу ў бліжэйшы час пабачыць свет анталогія твораў марыйскіх пісьменнікаў у перакладзе на мову Купалы і Коласа.

– Мы збіраемся рэалізаваць і іншыя сумесныя творчыя праекты, – дзеліцца сваімі меркаваннямі пра беларуска-марыйскія літаратурныя сувязі старшыня Саюза пісьменнікаў Беларусі Алесь Карлюкевіч. – Па-першае, яны звязаны з развіццём стасункаў перакладчыкаў у нашых нацыянальных літаратурах. Іх уважлівыя погляды на паэзію і прозу іншага народа, беларусаў – на марыйскую літаратуру, марыйцаў – на беларускую, паспрыяюць знайсці лепшыя творы, якія варты перакладу. Па-другое, неабходна наладзіць супольную працу літаратурнаўцаў, літаратурных крытыкаў, каб параўнаць тое, куды і як рухаюцца нашы паэзія і проза, у чым яны падобныя ці адрозныя. Магчыма, ужо на пачатку наступнага года мы арганізуем супольны круглы стол на тэму “Сучасны стан беларуска-марыйскіх літаратурных сувязяў”. Добра было б прыцягнуць да гэтай справы і ўніверсітэцкую, і акадэмічную моладзь.

Кастусь Лешніца

У БАШКАРТАСТАНЕ ГАСЦЮЕ “ВЯСЁЛКА”

Ва Уфе, сталіцы Рэспублікі Башкартастан (Расійская Федэрацыя), пабачыў свет спецыяльны выпуск дзіцячага часопіса “Акбузат” (такое імя ў башкірскім эпасе “Урал батыр” носіць чароўны конь), які прысвечаны Беларусі і беларускім дзецям. Нумар складзены пры падтрымцы беларускага дзіцячага часопіса “Вясёлка”.

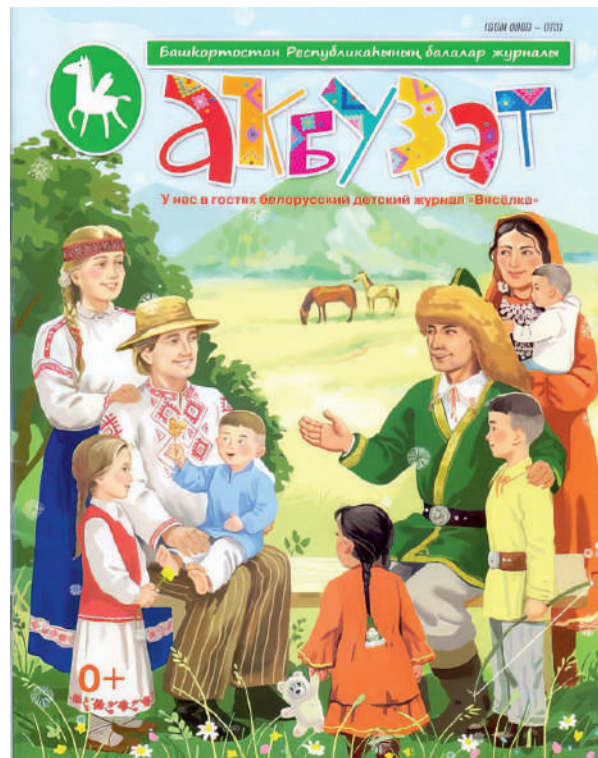
З прывітальнага слова галоўнага рэдактара часопіса “Акбузат” пісьменніцы Ларысы Абдулінай: “Дарагія хлопчыкі і дзяўчынкі – чытачы часопіса “Вясёлка”, дзеці Рэспублікі Беларусь!

Ад імя часопіса “Акбузат”, які вось болей трыццаці гадоў радуе дзяцей Рэспублікі Башкартастан, мы вітаем вас!

Наша рэспубліка шматнацыянальная. У нас дзве дзяржаўныя мовы – башкірская і руская. Наш часопіс выходзіць дзяцей у традыцыях і культуры башкірскага народа. У сяле Балтыка Іглінскага раёна Рэспублікі Башкартастан жывуць беларусы.

Акбузат – гэта чароўны конь з эпаса “Урал батыр”, які дапамог галоўнаму герою знайсці жывую ваду і, спатоліўшы гэтай вадою зямельку, прынесці людзям дабро і радасць. Няхай нашы выданні заўсёды радуюць дзяцей усяго свету і будуць масты дружбы і міру паміж народамі і краінамі!”

У часопісе са сваімі творамі выступаюць школьнікі з Мінска, Ашмян, Крычава – Алеся Гамідава, Арсеній Пятліцкі, Ганна Піміхава. Малюнкі да іх публікацый зрабіла Гульназ Гілязетдінава. Змешчаны ў башкірскім выданні і нарыс Айгуль Габітавай “Захапляльнае падарожжа”, у якім распавядаецца пра адкрыццё башкірскім хлопчыкам Булатам беларускай сталіцы. Падарожжа ў часопісе і “Кароценькі башкірска-руско-беларускі размоўнік”. А мастачка Ліяна Нігаматзянава праз комікс пераказала адну з беларускіх народных казак. Асобныя старонкі “Акбузата” – малюнкі юных творцаў з арт-студыі з Заслаўля Мінскага раёна, кіраўніком якой з’яўляецца Анастасія Балыш. Ёсць



у часопісе і беларуская старонка – на мове Купалы і Коласа надрукавана славетная “Калыханка”: “Доўгі дзень, цёплы дзень./ Адплывае за аблогі...”

– “Акбузат” і надалей будзе з задавальненнем прадастаўляць свае старонкі аўтарам з Беларусі – і зусім юным, і тым, хто ўжо стала працуе ў дзіцячай літаратуры, – каменціруе падзею галоўны рэдактар часопіса. – Спадзяёмся, што і ў Беларусі, дзякуючы намаганням “Вясёлкі”, іншых дзіцячых выданняў, болей даведаюцца пра Башкартастан, пра нашу нацыянальную культуру.

Раман **Сэрвач**

КІТАЙСКІ ВЕКТАР КОЛАСАЗНАўСТВА

У Дзяржаўным літаратурна-мемарыяльным музеі Якуба Коласа ў Мінску прайшла XXXVII Міжнародная навуковая канферэнцыя “Каласавіны”. Удзел у абмеркаванні розных аспектаў жыцця і творчасці народнага песняра Беларусі прынялі музейныя работнікі, універсітэцкія і акадэмічныя літаратуразнаўцы.

фота А. Дзядзюля

У канферэнцыі ўзяў удзел прафесар Нанькайскага ўніверсітэта перакладчык беларускай і рускай паэзіі Гу Юй. Кітайскі вучоны і літаратар, які падрыхтаваў даклад “Вопыт перакладу чатырох вершаў Якуба Коласа”. Гу Юй добра знаёмы з беларускай літаратурай. Напрыканцы 1980-х гг. (а калі дакладней – у ліпені 1989 года) ён быў гасцем Саюза пісьменнікаў Беларусі, сустракаўся з народным пісьменнікам Беларусі Максімам Танкам. Сярод тых беларускіх паэтаў, чыя творчасць ужо прыцягнула Гу Юя як перакладчыка – Янка Купала, Максім Багдановіч, Цётка, Анатоль Сыс і інш. У дакладзе Гу Юя на “Каласавінах” – расповед пра тое, з якімі складанасцямі сутыкнуўся майстра пры пераўвасабленні коласаўскіх вершаў на кітайскую мову. Між іншым, цэлы шэраг падборак беларускай паэзіі ў перакладзе Гу Юя на кітайскую мову надрукаваны ў 2023 годзе ў часопісе “Беларусь”, які выдаецца на англійскай, кітайскай і беларускай мовах.

Яшчэ з 2012 года ў Паднябеснай у Цяньцзінскім універсітэце існуе Цэнтр Якуба Коласа. Яго дырэктарам працуе ўніверсітэцкі выкладчык з Беларусі – кандыдат педагогічных навук Вольга Шахаб. Акрамя гэтага, яна займае пасаду дацэнта кафедры беларускай мовы Цяньцзінскага ўніверсітэта замежных моў. Тэма выступлення Вольгі Васільеўны – “Выкарыстанне коласазнаўчай інфармацыі пры навучанні беларускай мове кітайскіх студэнтаў”. Дарэчы, зусім нядаўна ў Цяньцзіне працавала выстаўка з Коласаўскага музея, прысвечаная 100-годдзю легендарнай паэмы “Новая зямля”. А ў 2018 годзе ва ўніверсітэце быў усталяваны помнік народнаму песняру Беларусі Якубу Коласу.

У праграме трэцяй секцыі “Каласавіны” – даклад кітаязнаўца, перакладчыка Веранікі Карлюкевіч “Кітайскі паэт, перакладчык, мастак Гаа Ман – аўтар каліграфічнага партрэта Якуба Коласа”. Нагадаем, што Гаа Ман (1926 – 2017) – кітайскі перакладчык, пісьменнік, вучоны, мастак. Быў знаёмы з многімі дзеячамі савецкай літаратуры – Мікалаем Ціханавым, Барысам Васільевым, Чынгізам Айтматавым, Барысам Палявым і інш. У 1957 годзе ў якасці перакладчыка працаваў з Максімам Танкам падчас яго візіту ў Кітай. У 1958 годзе ў Пекіне выйшла ў перакладзе на кітайскую мову кніга вершаў М. Танка. Перакладчыкамі выступілі Гэ Баацюань і У Ланьхань (пад гэтым псеўданімам выступаў Гаа Ман). У Пекіне з Гаа Манам сустракаліся многія беларускія журналісты і перакладчыкі – Навум Гальпяровіч, Мікалай Літвінаў, Вольга Гальпяровіч, Вераніка Карлюкевіч, народны паэт Беларусі Рыгор Барадулін і інш. Даследчыца ў сваім дакладзе звярнула ўвагу на тое, што Гаа Ман не аднойчы друкаваў рэпрадукцыі партрэта Якуба Коласа ў сваіх кнігах, на старонках перыядычных выданняў. А яшчэ Гаа Ман з’яўляецца аўтарам каліграфічных партрэтаў іншых беларускіх пісьменнікаў – Янкі Купалы, Максіма Танка, Васіля Быкава...

І кітайская тэматыка “Каласавіны” 2023 года, і выстаўка Коласаўскага музея ў Цяньцзінскім універсітэце падказваюць шырокі шлях да развіцця беларуска-кітайскіх стасункаў у фармаце вывучэння беларускай класічнай літаратуры.

Мікола **Берлеж**

ЮБІЛЕЙ З ДУМКАМІ АБ "НОВАЙ ЗЯМЛІ"

«Калі патрэбна было б для будучых часоў пакінуць толькі адзін твор, які б даў уяўленне аб тым, што такое беларускі народ, хіба не «Новую зямлю» назваў кожны з нас!», – пісаў Алесь Адамовіч. Паэма Якуба Коласа, якая пабачыла свет сто гадоў таму, адразу прыцягнула ўвагу шматлікіх даследчыкаў, і яны далі ёй высокую ацэнку. Сярод іх – Яўхім Карскі, Максім Гарэцкі, Іван Замоцін, Кузьма Чорны. У розныя часы свае артыкулы ёй прысвяцілі Уладзімір Конан, Іван Навуменка, Міхась Мушынскі.

Якубаў дубочак

Нягледзячы на тое, што крытыкі адразу ж пасля выхаду ў свет адзначылі геніяльнасць аўтара «Новай зямлі», былі часы, калі твор мог патрапіць у разрад «шкодных». У 30-я гады, калі быў узяты кірунак на калектывізацыю, вялася барацьба з рэлігіяй, была «не да месца» паэма, у якой паказвалася мара беларускіх сялян аб уласнай зямлі. Ішлі рэпрэсіі, Коласа таксама выклікалі на допыты. Да перавыдання «Новай зямлі» ў 1934 годзе ён нават вымушаны быў пісаць прадмову з крытыкай галоўнага героя... Але прайдзе зусім не шмат часу і ўзнятую Коласам тэму падхопіць іншы пісьменнік. На гэта ў сваім дакладзе на Міжнароднай навуковай канферэнцыі «Каласавіны», што прайшла ў Мінску ў доме-музеі Якуба Коласа, звярнула ўвагу вучоны сакратар Дзяржаўнага музея-запаведніка Міхаіла Шолахава Лідзія Слюсарэнка: «Колас прыйшоў у літаратуру намнога раней за Шолахава, але абодва літаратары стваралі творы ў агульным ідэйным і духоўным полі».

Наладжванню стасункаў з расійскімі калегамі паспрыялі дні культуры Растоўскай вобласці, што прайшлі ў верасні. На іх разам з прадстаўнікамі тэатральных і творчых калектываў у Мінск прыехалі і музейныя работнікі. Супрацоўнікі Дзяржаўнага мемарыяльнага музея Якуба Коласа заключылі пагадненні з растоўскімі калегамі, намецілі агульныя асветніцкія і выставачныя праекты. Так, для часовай экспазіцыі ў музеі-запаведніку Шолахава былі перададзены прыжыццёвыя партрэты Якуба Коласа работы мастака Сямёна Геруса. А ў дзень нараджэння Коласа супрацоўнікі Растоўскага этнаграфічнага музея на сваёй сядзібе пасадзілі дубочак у гонар Якуба Коласа. Можна сказаць, што традыцыя па пасадцы дрэў «памяці» перанята ад самога пісьменніка – побач з домам-музеем Якуба Коласа растуць дубы, якія ён садзіў у гонар сваіх сыноў. Падчас канферэнцыі Лідзія Слюсарэнка перадала беларускім калегам каталог, у якім надрукаваны аўтограф Якуба Коласа. Нагадала, што Міхаіл



Шолахаў прылічваў Коласа да буйных заснавальнікаў савецкай літаратуры, а таксама звярнула ўвагу на падабенствы ў біяграфіях пісьменнікаў, агульныя жыццёвыя арыенціры, павагу да сямейных традыцый, адносіны да літаратурнай працы, аўтабіяграфічнасць твораў, тое, што абодвух аўтараў цікавіла аднолькавая праблематыка. Так, Шолахаў узнімаў праблему адарванасці пісьменнікаў ад рэальнага жыцця, пра якую Колас гаварыў яшчэ ў 30-я гады. Цікава, што ў перакладзе на нарвежскую мову твор Шолахава «Поднятая целина», быў пададзены як «Новая зямля».

Запаветы продкаў

Знакамітыя радкі «Мой родны кут, як ты мне мілы» Якуб Колас напісаў, знаходзячыся ў Мінскім астрозе. Таму чытача ніколі не пакідае адчуванне, што класік у вершы раскрыў сваю душу, любоў да зямлі і пашану да запаветаў продкаў.

У 1947 годзе на нарадзе маладых пісьменнікаў Якуб Колас узгадваў: «Калі я сядзеў у астрозе, перада мной

вельмі ярка паўсталі малюнкi маленства, прыроды. Я не думаў тады яшчэ аб напісанні паэмы. Хацелася проста расказаць аб тым, што так маляўніча паўстала ў маёй памяці. Я апісаў леснікову пасаду. Затым з'явілася жаданне напісаць большае. Так паступова вырасталася паэма «Новая зямля».

Колас працаваў над гэтым творам больш за 12 гадоў. Пісаў у тым ліку ў эвакуацыі падчас Першай сусветнай вайны. З 1915 па 1921 год ён знаходзіўся на Куршчыне, і гэтыя гады для яго адзначаны неймавернай тугой па радзіме. Паэма стваралася ў эпоху глабальных палітычных змен, якія, як прадбачыў пісьменнік, неслі пагрозу распаду векавых традыцый сялянскага жыцця. Таму ён так хацеў адлюстравать эпоху, паказаць каштоўнасці беларускага народа. «Запаветы «новазямельцаў», захаванне традыцый у паэме Якуба Коласа» – такую тэму для свайго выступлення абрала навуковы супрацоўнік Цэнтра даследаванняў беларускай культуры, мовы і літаратуры Нацыянальнай акадэміі навук Беларусі, унучка Коласа Вера Міцкевіч.

■ Ілюстрацыі Арлена Кашкурэвіча

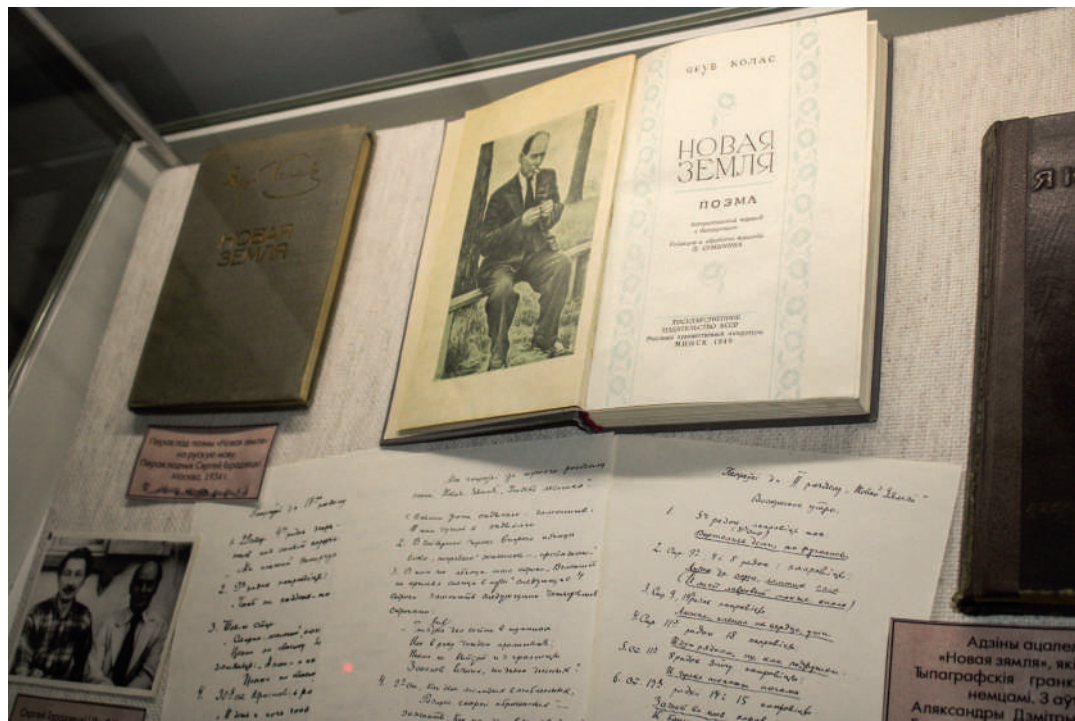


Безумоўна, тэма традыцый у паэме «Новая зямля» не раз ужо разглядалася рознымі даследчыкамі. Колас расказаў, як святкавалі Каляды і Вялікдзень, па яго творах нават можна ўзнаўляць стравы нацыянальнай кухні. Але Вера Данілаўна звярнула ўвагу на тое, як у паэме раскрыта дзіцячая тэма, паспрабавала правесці паралелі з сучаснасцю. Так, сёння, як і сто гадоў таму, бацькі клапацяцца пра лёс сваіх дзяцей, які залежыць ад атрыманай адукацыі. Калі ў доме збіраюцца госці, мы часта накрываем малым асобна, гэтак жа як і ў паэме «Новая зямля», дзе паказана, што старэйшыя дзеці, якія ўжо былі далучаны да працы на зямлі і па гаспадарцы, садзіліся за стол з бацькамі, а малеча ела асобна. У «Новай зямлі» апісаны куцця і іншыя калядныя традыцыі, і тое, што было прынята сустрэцца свята ўсёй сям'ёй, каб цэлы год правесці разам. Вера Данілаўна звярнула ўвагу і на асаблівае стаўленне герояў паэмы да рэлігіі. З-за ўздзеяння цэнзараў, скарачэнняў магло падацца, што героі з іроніяй ставяцца да духоўных традыцый. Насамрэч усё было не так, некаторыя моманты становяцца больш зразумелымі, калі ведаць гісторыю сям'і. Коласа хрысцілі ў праваслаўе, а вось яго бацькі спачатку былі каталікамі. Калі ў Мікалаеўшчыне быў скасаваны каталіцкі прыход, сяляне былі перахрэшчаны. Напрыклад, маці Коласа на той час, як гэта адбывалася, было ўжо дзесяць гадоў. Таму ў паэме «Новая зямля» на Вялікдзень пасля вяртання са святочнай службы ў царкве бацька дастае з бэлькі кантычку і сям'я спявае па-польску святочныя песні...

Вачыма віцебскіх мастакоў

Асоба Коласа і яго творы заўсёды былі цікавыя мастакам. У мастацкім музеі Віцебска захоўваецца багата такіх работ. Сярод іх і адзін з першых партрэтаў Якуба Коласа, які зрабіў у 1925 годзе мастак Абрам Бразар. На карціне ён раскрыў вобраз пісьменніка, дакладна прапісаў дэталі касцюма, зробленага з дарагога сукна, малюнкі на кашулі і галыштуку. Падчас «Каласавін» загадчык філіяла «Мастацкі музей» Віцебскага абласнога краязнаўчага музея Аляксандр Багацёнак перадаў лічбавую копію партрэта ў дом-музей Якуба Коласа і расказаў пра мастакоў з Віцебска, якія спрычыніліся да «коласазнаўства».

Абрам Бразар нарадзіўся ў Кішынёве (на той час Бесарабскай губерніі). У 1912 – 1915 гадах жыў і працаваў у Парыжы ў знакамітым «Вуллі», дзе пазнаёміўся з Шагалам. З 1918 года жыў у Віцебску, выкладаў у Вышэйшай школе мастацтваў, займаўся арганізацыяй выставак, камплектацыяй Віцебскага музея мастацтваў. Загінуў у Мінскім гета. Яго расстралялі з сям'ёй і двума дзецьмі ў красавіку 1942 года. Ва ўсім свеце захавалася ўсяго каля дзясятка работ мастака, чатыры з іх знаходзяцца ў Беларусі.



■ Папраўкі Якуба Коласа да перакладу паэмы "Новая Зямля"

У 1926 годзе ў Віцебску адкрыўся другі (пасля Мінска) дзяржаўны тэатр. З 1944 года ён носіць імя Якуба Коласа. Тут было пастаўлена шэсць спектакляў па творах класіка. Адзін з найбольш вядомых з іх – «Сымон музыка» – у 1976 быў адзначаны прэміяй Ленінскага камсамола. У Віцебскім мастацкім музеі захоўваюцца работы мастакоў, якія працавалі над афармленнем гэтага і іншых спектакляў. У прыватнасці, у фондах маецца больш за 300 работ Яўгена Нікалаева, народнага мастака БССР, заслужанага дзеяча мастацтва, які за 35 гадоў працы ў тэатры аформіў больш за 200 спектакляў. Акрамя таго быў выдатным графікам, займаўся станковым і масляным жывапісам.

У Віцебскім мастацкім музеі захоўваюцца і эскізы да спектакляў «На дарозе жыцця» і «Сымон-музыка» паводле твораў Якуба Коласа, зробленыя Аляксандрам Салаўёвым, уладжэнцам Ленінградскай вобласці, які ў нацыянальным акадэмічным тэатры Я. Коласа працаваў мастаком-пастаноўшчыкам, а з 1977 па 1995 гады галоўным мастаком. Яго смелыя дэкарацыі, выкананыя ў авангарднай манеры, дазвалялі глыбей раскрыць характар герояў, ідэі, перадзеныя ў пастаноўцы. Адноўчы падчас гастролёў у Маскве, адразу пасля ўзняцця заслоны, глядачы, толькі

ўбачыўшы дэкарацыі Салаўёва, пачалі апладыраваць. У 1924 годзе студэнт Віцебскага мастацкага тэхнікума Заір Азгур, якому на той час было ўсяго 16 гадоў, быў запрошаны ў Мінск, дзе ляпіў Якуба Коласа. Можна сказаць, з тых часоў і завязалася сяброўства скульптара з сям'ёй пісьменніка, а таксама плённым партнёрскай сувязі. Менавіта Азгуру было даручана стварэнне скульптурнага ансамбля на плошчы Якуба Коласа ў Мінску. Бюст Коласа, які скульптар выканаў да 70-годдзя паэта, знаходзіцца ў пастаяннай экспазіцыі віцебскага музея.

У 1946 годзе пераехаў у Віцебск уладжэнец Цюменскай губерні Рыгор Клікушын, тут ён спачатку вучыўся, а пасля і працаваў у мастацкай вучэльні і на мастацка-графічным факультэце Педагагічнага інстытута. Займаўся афармленнем кніг папулярных аўтараў, у тым ліку Якуба Коласа. Яго называлі «каралём шрыфтоў». Дарэчы, створанымі ім шрыфтамі да гэтага часу карыстаюцца на прасторах СНД. Медальернай пластыкай – асобным скульптурным жанрам, калі твор не павінен быць памерамі большым за 20 сантыметраў, займаецца Валерый Магучы. У 1992 годзе да юбілею Якуба Коласа ён выканаў медаль з выявай класіка. Гэту і многія іншыя работы ён перадаў у Віцебскі мастацкі музей і

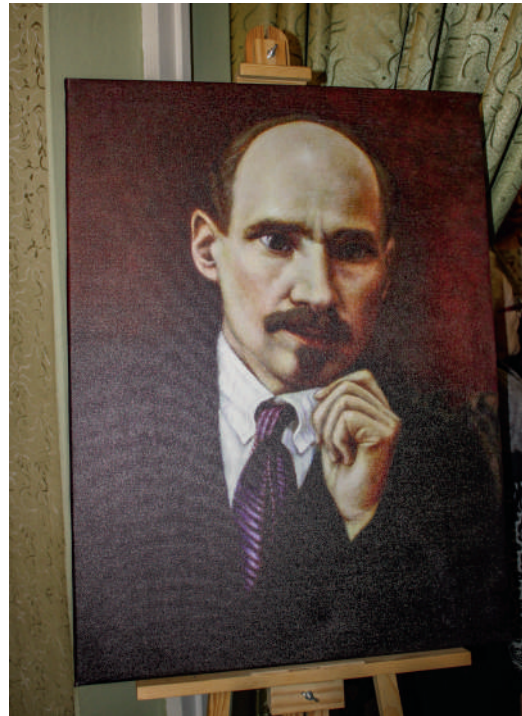
падзяліўся з супрацоўнікамі сваімі адчуваннямі: "Пасля гэтай працы я працуў Коласа, перачытаў яго. Калі тэма мяне не хвалюе, нічога не буду рабіць. Гэта будзе рамяство. Помню, што Колас мяне ўсхваляваў".

Да творчасці Коласа звярталіся і іншыя мастакі, якія працавалі ў Віцебску. Сярод іх – ураджэнец Тбілісі Віктар Андросаў, Сурэн Мірзаян, які меў армянскія карані. Цікава, што ўсё творцы, нягледзячы на тое, што жылі ў розныя часы, працавалі ў адметных тэхніках і прыбывалі ў Віцебск з іншых куткоў і нават краін, як заўважыў падчас канферэнцыі Аляксандр Багацёнак, змаглі аднолькава працуць Коласа, лаканічна гаварылі пра складаныя рэчы, адзначалі, што ў творчасці пісьменніка няма нічога лішняга, нанаснога. Заір Азгур, напрыклад, называў Якуба Коласа "песняром праўды".

Творчае ўвасабленне

Стагоддзе паэмы "Новая зямля" было адзначана не толькі навукавай канферэнцыяй. Цэлы год музейныя работнікі працуюць на папулярна-творчасці класіка. Яны правялі на Радзіме Коласа фестываль, прысвечаны знакамётаму твору. Выпусцілі і прэзентавалі факсімільнае выданне паэмы, узнавілі арыгінальны мастацкі шрыфт, пададзены на вокладцы той першай кнігі, якая пабачыла свет у 1923 годзе. Факсімільнае выданне музейшчыкі ўжо прадставілі ў Маскве і Кітаі.

А ў дзень нараджэння Коласа ў літаратурна-мемарыяльным музеі адкрылася выстаўка, прысвечаная "Новай зямлі". На ёй прадстаўлены выданні паэмы, якія пабачылі свет у розныя часы (паэма перавыдавалася дваццаць разоў). Пры жыцці Коласа былі надрукаваныя сем асобных выданняў "Новай зямлі". Над афармленнем твора працавалі вядомыя мастакі. Напрыклад, другое выданне паэмы – у 1927 годзе – аформіў фінскі мастак Аляксантэры Ахола-Вало. У 1920-я гады ён жыў і працаваў у Беларусі, вучыўся ў мастацкай школе ў Віцебску.



- Адзін з першых партрэтаў Якуба Коласа, зроблены Абрамам Бразарам
- Паэма "Новая зямля" перавыдавалася дваццаць разоў

На фоне роўненькіх палосак зямлі з прыгожымі стажкамі графік-афарміцель паказаў беларускага селяніна, які, абліваючыся потам ад цяжкай працы, беражліва трымае ў руках жменьку жытнёвых зярнят. На экспазіцыі прадстаўлены і сігнальны экзэмпляр выдання, якое Колас атрымаў у маі 1941 года. Яно мела прыгожае мастацкае афармленне. У кнізе былі змешчаны 14 графічных ілюстрацый, якія яскрава паказвалі вобразы герояў. Але ў тыраж кнігі не пайшла, пачалася вайна, захопнікі знішчылі друкарскія гранкі. Адзіны ацалелы асобнік Колас падарыў сваёй былой вучаніцы з Белдзяжпедтэхнікума Аляксандры Жукоўскай. Жанчына стала заслужанай настаўніцай БССР. Падарунак Коласа захоўвала як самую дарагую рэліквію. А пасля смерці жанчыны кніга перададзена ў фонды музея Якуба Коласа.

"Новая зямля" выходзіла і ў Вільні. У 1952 годзе ў Мюнхене яе выдала беларуская дыяспара. Некалькі перавыданняў паэмы афармляў Анатоль Волкаў. Так, у кнізе, якая друкавалася ў 1958 годзе, змешчаны нават два віды графічных ілюстрацый – на адных малюнках пададзены добра выпісаныя, прапрацаваныя да дробязяў вобразы, другая частка зроблена ў іншай манеры, ілюстрацыі адрозніваюцца прастатой і лаканічнасцю.

Малюнкi Волкава асобна прадстаўлены на выставе. А яшчэ тут можна пабачыць арыгіналы ілюстрацый да паэмы "Новая зямля" Арлена Кашкурэвіча, зробленыя ў 1968 годзе, якія ніколі не друкаваліся. У розны час паэму ілюстравалі такія мастакі, як Эдуард Агуновіч, Георгій Паплаўскі, Рыгор Фралоў, Анатоль Александровіч, Васіль Шаранговіч, Павел Гуткоўскі.

Выданне "Новай зямлі" 1968 года з адметнымі ілюстрацыямі Георгія Паплаўскага было адзначана на конкурсе ў Лейпцыгу дыпламам "Прыгажэйшай кнігі свету".

Колас, якія лічыў "Новаю зямлю" асноўнай паэмай у сваёй творчасці, спадзяваўся, што яго твор будзе перакладацца на іншыя мовы. У 1934 годзе з'явіўся першы пераклад на рускую мову. Яго зрабіў Сяргей Гарадзецкі. Але ён быў не поўным, з 30 раздзелаў у арыгінале ў рускамоўнай кнізе было толькі 13. Наступную кнігу на рускай мове Колас чакаў 15 гадоў. Яна пабачыла свет у 1949 годзе, над ёй працаваў калектыў перакладчыкаў. Адзін з іх – Пётр Сямынін нават прыехаў у Мінск і жыў два месяцы ў кабінце Коласа. Пісьменнік хваляваўся за кожны радок, глумачыў, перакладаў незразумелыя словы, нават затрымаў здачу перакладу ў друк. У

экспазіцыі музея прадстаўлены рукапіс з праўкамі Коласа да перакладу паэмы на рускую мову. І тым не менш рускамоўны чытач так і не змог убачыць "Новую зямлю" цалкам, кніга выйшла з купюрамі і скажэннямі. У той час лічылася непрымальнай паэтызацыя заможнага, як тады казалі "кулацкага", сялянскага жыцця. Напрыклад, у раздзеле паэмы "Падгляд пчол" было выкраслена аж 14 строф. Затое выдатнымі атрымаліся пераклады "Новай зямлі" на ўкраінскую і польскую мовы, што звязана ў тым ліку і з тым, што іх аўтары добра ведалі беларускую мову. Так, Чэслаў Сенюх нарадзіўся ў 1930 годзе ў мястэчку Любча Навагрудскага павета, а ў 1945 годзе яго сям'я пераехала ў Беласток. Над перакладам "Новай зямлі" на польскую мову, якую ён называў беларускай "песняй песняў", Сенюх працаваў дзесяць гадоў.

Над поўным перакладам на англійскую мову працавала Вера Рыч, на жаль, яна так і не паспела закончыць гэтую работу. Асобныя ўрыўкі з паэмы "Новая зямля" перакладаліся на англійскую, іспанскую, французскую, балгарскую, армянскую і іншыя мовы.

Алена **Дзядзюля**
■ Фота аўтара.

ДЗЕЛЯ МІРУ І ЗГОДЫ



З кастрычніка па снежань праходзяць абласныя адборачныя туры XIV Рэспубліканскага фестывалю нацыянальных культур. У Мінску прадстаўнікі нацыянальна-культурных аб'яднанняў сваю творчасць, накіраваную на захаванне традыцый і здабыткаў продкаў,

паказалі 28 кастрычніка. Пытанні, якія датычацца адбору ўдзельнікаў і правядзення Рэспубліканскага фестывалю нацыянальных культур былі разгледжаны і на чарговым пасяджэнні Кансультатывага міжэтнічнага савета пры Упаўнаважаным па справах рэлігій і нацыянальнасцяў. На сустрэчы ў апарате Упаўнаважанага па справах рэлігій і нацыянальнасцяў члены Савета змаглі задаць свае пытанні наконт змен у заканадаўстве Рэспублікі Беларусь, што рэгламентуе дзейнасць грамадскіх аб'яднанняў, Кансультанту ўпраўлення па пытаннях некамерцыйных арганізацый Міністэрства юстыцыі Яўгену Какушы. Ён расказаў пра парадак падрыхтоўкі і прадстаўлення ў рэгіструючыя органы матэрыялаў для прывядзення ўстаноўчых дакументаў у адпаведнасці з патрабаваннямі Закона Рэспублікі Беларусь “Аб грамадскіх аб'яднаннях” у рэдакцыі ад 14 лютага 2023 года.

На пасяджэнні таксама адбыліся выбары старшыні, намесніка старшыні і адказнага сакратара Кансультатывага міжэтнічнага савета. Удзельнікі сустрэчы аднадушна прагаласавалі за тое, каб старшынёй аб'яднання па-ранейшаму быў старшыня Мінскага гарадскога армянскага культурна-асветніцкага таварыства “Айастан” Георгій Егіазаран, які, дарэчы, напрыканцы мінулага года быў адзначаны прэміяй “За духоўнае адраджэнне” за ўнёсак ва ўмацаванне нацыянальнай згоды ў беларускім грамадстве.

“Нам ёсць чым ганарыцца”, – заўважыў Георгій Анушаванавіч, падводзячы вынікі працы за апошнія гады. Савет робіць вельмі многа для ўмацавання міжнацыянальнай згоды, наладжвання сяброўскіх, партнёрскіх стасункаў паміж прадстаўнікамі розных народаў. Нацыянальна-культурныя аб'яднанні, якія дзейнічаюць у нашай краіне, праводзяць разнастайныя сустрэчы, канцэрты, рыхтуюць дабрачынныя праграмы, рэгулярна ўдзельнічаюць у экалагічных акцыях па пасадцы леса, адзначаюць дзяржаўныя святы, шануюць памяць герояў і ахвяр Вялікай Айчыннай вайны, бяруць удзел у разнастайных культурных і сацыяльных праектах. Так, на пасяджэнні Савета, яны зноў пацвердзілі сваё жаданне далучыцца да рэспубліканскай дабрачыннай навагодняй акцыі “Нашы дзеці”.

ВОБРАЗ ЕЎФРАСІННІ НАТХНЯЕ МАСТАКОЎ

У Нацыянальным мастацкім музеі адкрылася выстаўка “Святасць зямлі беларускай”.

Выстаўка – вынік VIII Міжнароднага мастацкага пленэру, арганізатарамі якога выступілі Беларускі саюз мастакоў, Беларуская праваслаўная царква, Беларускі саюз жанчын. Мастакі з Беларусі, Расіі і Малдовы пісалі карціны, натхніўшыся жыццём і дзейнасцю Еўфрасінні Полацкай, нябеснай заступніцы зямлі беларускай. Яе вобраз – сімвал міралюбства і любові да бліжніх. З ёй звязаны знакавыя падзеі ў гісторыі і культуры: будаўніцтва храмаў, якія сталі цэнтрамі асветы ў Полацкім княстве, пераклад і стварэнне рукапісаў царкоўных кніг. Па просьбе асветніцы была створана адна з беларускіх святынь – знакаміты Крыж Еўфрасінні Полацкай.

Удзельнікі пленэру наведаль Спас-Еўфрасіннеўскі жаночы манастыр у Полацку, пазнаёміліся з праваслаўнымі святынямі горада. На выстаўцы ў Нацыянальным мастацкім музеі прадстаўлена каля паўсотні твораў, сярод якіх – пейзажы, нацюрморты, сюжэтыныя і сімвалічныя кампазіцыі, творы, якія прысвечаны жыццёваму шляху Еўфрасінні Полацкай. На экспазіцыі падазены і 30 работ пераможцаў рэспубліканскага конкурсу дзіцячага малюнка.

На ўрачыстым адкрыцці выстаўкі Патрыяршы Экзарх усяе Беларусі Мітрапаліт Мінскі і Заслаўскі Венямін, адзначыў, што сярод святых зямлі беларускай прападобная Еўфрасіння Полацкая займае асаблівае месца. Ён спадзяецца, што экспазіцыя паслужыць таму, каб больш людзей звярнулі ўвагу на вобраз святой, асэнсавалі яго і судакрануліся з духоўнасцю.

Бібліятэка Мінскай духоўнай акадэміі сумесна з Прэзідэнцкай бібліятэкай прадставілі на выстаўцы факсімільныя выданні жыцця святой, царкоўныя кнігі, факсімільнае выданне Полацкага Евангелля. Таксама тут размешчаны філатэлістычныя работы выдавецкага цэнтра “Марка” РУП “Белпошта”, на якіх паказаны святыні Полацкай зямлі і галаграфічная выява Крыжа Еўфрасінні Полацкай.

Выстаўку змогуць пабачыць не толькі жыхары і госці сталіцы. Яна будзе экспанавана ў розных гарадах Беларусі.

