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WE ARE A SPACE POWER!

85



НАЦЫЯНАЛЬНЫ МАСТАЦКІ МУЗЕЙ
РЭСПУБЛІКІ БЕЛАРУСЬ

НАЦИОНАЛЬНОМУ ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННОМУ МУЗЕЮ РЕСПУБЛИКИ БЕЛАРУСЬ – 85!

Национальный художественный музей Республики Беларусь отмечает 85-летие!

Постоянная экспозиция музея является центром притяжения любителей искусства. Музей хранит более 37 000 произведений искусства из более чем 132 стран, объединяя под сводами 12 веков истории человечества.

Художественный сегодня – это многофункциональный культурный центр: храм искусства, концертная площадка, лекционная аудитория, интерактивная локация для детей и взрослых, а также одно из любимых мест для культурного досуга и красивых фото.

В честь юбилея главная арт-площадка страны в сердце Минска удивит и порадует уникальными масштабными выставками: сакральная белорусская скульптура 17–18 вв., синкретическое искусство Китая, шедевры народных художников Беларуси, выставки художников-юбиляров мировой известности (Ю. Пэна, И. Репина, Л. Альперовича) и многие другие яркие выставочные проекты.



THE NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS IS 85!

The National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus celebrates its 85th anniversary!

The permanent exhibition of the museum is a centre of attraction for art lovers. The museum houses more than 37,000 works of art from more than 132 countries, bringing together 12 centuries of human history.

Today the Art Museum is a multifunctional cultural centre: a temple of art, a concert venue, a lecture hall, an interactive location for children and adults, and also one of the favourite places for cultural leisure and beautiful photos.

In honour of the anniversary, the country's main art venue in the heart of Minsk will surprise and delight with unique large-scale exhibitions: sacred Belarusian sculpture of the 17th–18th centuries, syncretic art of China, masterpieces of folk artists of Belarus, exhibitions of world-famous artists (Yuri Pen, Ilya Repin, Leu Alpiarovich) and many other bright exhibition projects.

白俄罗斯共和国国家艺术博物馆85周年!

白俄罗斯共和国国家艺术博物馆迎来建馆 85 周年!

博物馆的常设展览吸引着艺术爱好者。博物馆收藏了来自 132 个国家的 37 000 多件艺术品，将 12 个世纪的人类历史融合在一起。

如今，艺术博物馆已成为一个多功能文化中心：艺术殿堂、音乐会场、演讲厅、儿童和成人互动场所，以及最受欢迎的文化休闲场所和照片拍摄地之一。

为了庆祝周年，位于明斯克市中心的国家艺术博物馆将举办独一无二的大型展览：17–18 世纪白俄罗斯神圣雕塑、中国艺术、白俄罗斯民间艺术家的杰作、世界著名艺术家——Yuri Pen, Ilya Repin, Leu Alpiarovich 的展览，以及其他精彩的展览项目。

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Upon arrival in the Kremlin, the President of Belarus, Russian journalists, as is tradition, were very active with questions. And that's what the discussion was about.



30 Time for active actions

Despite all the obstacles, over the past three years the country has managed to increase industrial production by almost half. And last year the export of such products reached a record figure for the last decade - \$6.5 billion. However, the focus of the President's April meeting was not on achievements, but on those problems that require immediate solutions.

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WE ARE A SPACE POWER!

The whole country never tires of repeating: space is ours! We are proud! We have definitely gained a foothold in the list of space powers. The flight of the first cosmonaut of sovereign Belarus, Marina Vasilevskaya, brought the country to a new level. And this level will certainly grow.

In the meantime, it's time for high rewards. The President presented them to the participants and organisers of the space flight of the first Belarusian cosmonaut in sovereign history. The Head of State awarded Marina Vasilevskaya the title of Hero of Belarus and presented the Cosmonaut Certificate of the Republic of Belarus No. 1.

At the ceremony, Aleksandr Lukashenko once again emphasized what this space flight means for Belarus, "This is a new level of participation in the space programmes of sovereign Belarus and a new level of allied, very kind, fraternal relations between Belarus and Russia, our peoples... We need this. We are a space country!"

By the way, opening the event, the Head of State noted that for the last few weeks the country has lived precisely under this slogan, idea, "It was with these words that we saw off and greeted the first cosmonaut in the history of sovereign Belarus, Marina Vasilevskaya. Of course, we are proud of our fellow countrymen — everyone who, over the years, has brought glory to their homeland by developing space technology and conquering space."

Well, Aleksandr Lukashenko evaluates the flight itself as follows, "This is a new level of participation in space programmes, I repeat, of sovereign Belarus and a new level of allied, very good, fraternal relations between Belarus and Russia, our peoples."

The President added that national flags unfurled at an altitude of more than 400 km from the Earth became a symbol of the fraternal ties of the two peoples.

Worthy of the brightest stars

Marina Vasilevskaya is the best of the best, without options. But it is admirable and respectful that a huge number of Belarusian women responded to the call to try themselves in manned astronautics. Our women are magnificent in everything, and the Head of State did not ignore this obvious fact, "We watched the flight with bated breath, admiring Marina's courage and determination. Well done! We can be proud of all the girls participating in our project. You know that initially there were more than two thousand."

After Marina's flight, there are now thousands of them — ready to conquer space, who are ready to take this worthy step. Worthy, aimed at testing the limits of their capabilities and meeting the expectations of millions of Belarusians.

Endurance at its finest

The President addressed Marina Vasilevskaya, "You, Marina, can be said to be luckier than others. But you yourself are great. You deserve this flight, absolutely



objectively. It wasn't easy. The hardest part is behind you — training, worries, stress."

Aleksandr Lukashenko did not hide the fact that he was also very worried about the crew. The crew with the participation of Marina Vasilevskaya had enough reasons to worry when the first start was stopped by automation and it was postponed to another date.

Being first is a big responsibility

Now the most difficult period for the first cosmonaut is over, but in general there are still many achievements ahead. The following words of the Head of State sounded like guidance, "I know what it's like to be first. Today you entered every Belarusian family, all those families who watched you, worried with you, your parents. The moment of sudden fame is a new burden of responsibility, a very heavy one that you will have to bear for the rest of your life. I'm sure you can handle it."

The Head of State addressed words of gratitude to Marina Vasilevskaya's backup crew member, Anastasia Lenkova, "You're great, you passed all the tests, like the first cosmonaut, with honour. I know that for sure. Of course, I know what you were worried about. I would also worry when you are one step away from your dream and it turns out a little differently. But you behaved with dignity. And the experience gained, I promise, will not be lost. We will do our best to make your dream come true."

Addressing those present at the ceremony, the President thanked everyone who organised and provided scientific support for the project, who prepared the girls for the flight,



“Our scientists, our doctors, trainers, teachers. Everyone who helped them become even more confident in themselves. I am very grateful to my parents. They raised worthy daughters of our Belarus.”

Space has no limits

The first cosmonaut is a big step forward. But not an apogee followed by a stop. Belarus will continue its space programme. In particular, a joint Belarusian-Russian satellite with high resolution is being prepared for launch. The Head of State drew attention to the fact that if there had been no development of the space industry in Belarus, then no one would have talked to us about the manned programme, “No one would have suggested that we fly into space. We know how to do a lot for space... In the coming years, together with the Russians, we will launch the world’s most advanced satellite into space. We will make it with a resolution of 25 — 30 centimeters.”

The President explained this characteristic, “That is, we will see a matchbox on Earth from this height, we will be able to distinguish any picture on it. This is high technology. The highest. Therefore, nuclear energy, space, biotechnology and many other areas, especially in the field of electric transport (we have made significant progress here)... The main thing is not to stop.”

Returning to the topic of the flight of the first cosmonaut of sovereign Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko noted, “Marina is among two empires: the Russian one — the most advanced in space — and the Americans. You understand, this is not just an image. This is our country’s greatest victory. Our people deserve it, and we will do everything in this direction, and we will do a lot more together with our girls.”

“I am proud that I was born in Belarus! I love my people!”

During the ceremony, Aleksandr Lukashenko invited the main heroine, Marina Vasilevskaya, to the podium. She admitted that she was proud to be the first cosmonaut of sovereign Belarus. This title is not just a high honour, but also a great responsibility. The cosmonaut warmly thanked the President for his great personal contribution to this project, “For support and care. Thank you for allowing this project to come to fruition. I am proud that I was born in Belarus! I love my people!”

Special words of gratitude from Marina Vasilevskaya are to the team of the Academy of Sciences and the Roscosmos State Corporation, pilot-cosmonaut Oleg Novitsky. And there is a wish for everyone from our cosmonaut, “I would like to wish all people to be kinder, to treat each other and their country kindly.”

Already in a conversation with journalists after the end of the ceremony, Marina Vasilevskaya admitted that she was moved and could not completely believe her high award. And she added, “I dedicate the space flight to my native Belarus, to my beloved Belarusians who supported me.”

Well, Marina Vasilevskaya described the last space mission with the famous phrase *per aspera ad astra*: due to an emergency situation, the Soyuz MS-25 spacecraft went into space on the second attempt and the cosmonauts spent two days on the road instead of several hours.

The astronaut said that all planned work and research had been completed. Moreover, the results of individual experiments have already been obtained and, according to Marina Vasilevskaya, everything worked out.

The astronaut has a lot of impressions about our planet. Marina Vasilevskaya describes it as powerful, beautiful and at the same time fragile, “There is a lot of information that I want to tell about our beautiful Earth. It is very powerful, beautiful — and it seems to be so fragile, because only a layer of the atmosphere protects it.”

When asked if Marina Vasilevskaya was dreaming about space after landing, she said that the other day she woke up and could not understand whether she was still in weightlessness or no.

Marina Vasilevskaya also told reporters that she plans to return to Zvyozdny Gorodok on the same day. Later it became known that the astronaut flew to Moscow on the presidential board along with the Head of State.

Vladimir **Mikhailov**

SUCH COOPERATION BENEFITS EVERYONE

On April 12th, Cosmonautics Day, the President of Belarus and the President of Russia planned a joint event in Moscow to mark the holiday. Aleksandr Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin summed up the results of the mission to the International Space Station, where for the first time in history the crew of the Union State worked: Belarusian cosmonaut Marina Vasilevskaya and Russian cosmonaut, our fellow countryman Oleg Novitsky. The heads of state talked with space explorers and discussed further prospects for cooperation in the space sector.

Yes, essentially a symbolic meeting took place on Cosmonautics Day in the Kremlin. Aleksandr Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin talked with members of the 21st expedition to the ISS Marina Vasilevskaya and Oleg Novitsky. This was the first crew of the Union State to work in orbit in the history of Belarusian-Russian relations. The day before, Aleksandr Lukashenko presented the first cosmonaut of sovereign Belarus, Marina Vasilevskaya, with the highest state award — the Hero of Belarus medal, as well as a cosmonaut certificate. And now the presidents of the two countries congratulated the brave Belarusian girl and her commander together. And everyone involved in the space industry as well. By the way, it became known that the President of Russia, by his decree, awarded Marina Vasilevskaya and Oleg Novitsky with the Order of Gagarin.

Reason for national pride

The successful space flight of our Marina Vasilevskaya is, without any pathos, a real triumph of sovereign Belarus. By the way, for Russia itself, the current Cosmonautics Day also turned out to be significant. The first launch of the Angara A5 heavy carrier rocket was successfully carried out from the new Vostochny cosmodrome. This is the most important event in Russian cosmonautics in recent decades, the key to a huge number of new space programmes and a powerful impetus for growth in high-tech sectors of the economy. Well, for Belarus, Marina Vasilevskaya's flight to the International Space Station became another reason for national pride and a breakthrough in the development of space technology. In essence, a new chapter has been written in the history of Belarusian-Russian relations. And it's too early to put an end to this. Aleksandr Lukashenko made this clear at a meeting with cosmonauts in the Kremlin. "This is big news for us." About the space flight of the Belarusian cosmonaut

At the meeting with the cosmonauts, the President of Belarus once again expressed gratitude to the Russian side





for cooperation in the field of space and support for the joint expedition to the ISS, “For you this is ordinary, for us this is big news, because it was our first female astronaut in space. The first Belarusian cosmonaut of independent Belarus. And Oleg is ours: he was born near Minsk. His mother lives there, we met recently. This is symbolic. Therefore, I am very grateful to you. It’s not just a tribute that we are here. If you had not given the go-ahead and agreed then, this flight would not have happened. thank you for Marina and thank you that Oleg was the commander of this flight. This is our unity: he was born in Belarus, served in the Soviet Union (pilot, test pilot), became an astronaut in Russia.”

The Head of State said that the field of astronautics is not alien to Belarusians. And he himself has long been immersed in the specifics of this topic, visited various cosmodromes, studied the technical side of the issue.

“Many people say: well, so what, here are the Belarusians symbolically... (flying into space). No, we are not symbolic. We are working very seriously on joint programmes. We are developing satellite programs together. Since Soviet times, we have maintained factories for the production of satellites, and we work together with the Russians. Now there are manned flights. I persuaded Vladimir Vladimirovich that we will continue to work together. He supported me.”

“The optics are yours,” Vladimir Putin responded.

“That’s without question. Our optics are no worse than in the West.”

“Yes, yes, good,” agreed the President of the Russian Federation.

“Therefore, it is supported that we will work together, we will fly into space.”

“We will see more joint flights of Russians and Belarusians into space”

Addressing the cosmonauts, Aleksandr Lukashenko congratulated them on their return to Earth and admitted, “This has been very difficult for us, especially for me. When the rocket didn’t launch right away, everything fell apart for me. I already thought: trouble. No, well done. Everything is fine, everything worked. You returned on time and carried out the necessary experiments. I think that we will see more joint flights between Russians and Belarusians.”

The plans here are truly grandiose. In the coming years, Russia plans to launch the first module of its domestic orbital station into orbit. This opens up great prospects for bilateral cooperation between Belarus and Russia.

“We are ready to do our best to create this space station and work together,” said Aleksandr Lukashenko.

“Without space it is impossible to effectively solve a single problem on Earth”

Vladimir Putin focused, in particular, on the importance of the development of the space industry, “Aleksandr Grigorievich and I just talked in detail (and touched on these topics before) about what exactly, where and in what areas we can interact in space. Now without space it is impossible to effectively solve a single problem on Earth. This is an increase in defence capability, modern

materials, medicines, logistics... Space technologies are used everywhere. Therefore, the topic is important. We have a programme in Russia until 2030, then there is one drawn up until 2036, we are constantly working on it.”

“It costs a lot.” About cooperation between Belarus and Russia in space

Pilot cosmonaut Oleg Novitsky thanked the heads of state for the initiative to implement this joint project, “It was very joyful and pleasant to participate in it. I understand that we had a great responsibility. Since I truly consider myself a person of the Soviet Union, I cannot divide our states in any way. And the fact that we work together like this, on human relations, is worth a lot. Marina took a very active part in the preparations and was not a burden at the station in any way. She worked quite independently and very quickly got into the mode of operation of the station.”

According to Oleg Novitsky, instructors and teachers at the Cosmonaut Training Centre expressed the general opinion that both Marina Vasilevskaya and her backup Anastasia Lenkova took preparations for the flight very seriously, “It’s not just like space tourists come to us, they pay for the flight, and they have the same demand accordingly. Responsible preparation took place here. Marina Vasilevskaya fully justified all the hopes placed on her. Therefore, if there are such joint projects in the future, it will be great.”

Marina Vasilevskaya admitted that she was happy to become the first cosmonaut in the history of sovereign Belarus, “I tried to do everything possible to complete the programme 100 percent and even more. The conquest of space by a citizen of Belarus is an outstanding event for our country. Of course, I would like to continue working in this industry. I am happy, glad and proud that this project took place.”

Vasily **Kharitonov**

THE EARTH IS VISIBLE THROUGH THE PORTHOLE...

After the meeting with the heads of state, Marina Vasilevskaya and Oleg Novitsky shared with journalists their impressions of the flight and talked about their future plans.



“I will remember the entire space journey, since each stage of preparation and flight has its own value,” noted Marina Vasilevskaya. “I can’t separate that some things were better and some things were worse. This is the first experience for our sovereign Belarus, and I took this important step with all responsibility. Every stage was important for me. In space I felt euphoria and calm, because all actions are very slow in zero gravity. It fascinates with its incomprehensibility of what is happening to your body. And, of course, when you see our beautiful Earth, it’s fantastic!”

When asked if she plans to continue to participate in selection for flights, the cosmonaut said that she still has to undergo rehabilitation, “Of course, we want to work for the benefit of our country in the space sector. And then we’ll see how it goes.” In turn, Oleg Novitsky noted that for him Belarus and Russia are one whole, “I was born in Belarus, graduated from school, and from there I entered a flight school. And when the opportunity to participate in the project arose, I was very happy with the trust shown. That I, a Belarusian by birth, was entrusted with flying together with Marina. Even though it was a short flight, it was very significant for me.”

AT THE BAIKONUR LAUNCH SITE

A large green service structure, the GEL'KO, is positioned around a Soyuz MS-25 spacecraft. The spacecraft consists of a white Service Module with a blue and white logo, and two large white Boosters. The structure is made of green metal beams and ladders, with yellow safety railings. Several workers in blue uniforms and white hard hats are visible on the ground and on the structure. The background is a clear blue sky.

Photojournalist of the Zvyazda Publishing House Viktor Ivanchikov was among those who directly observed the launch of the Soyuz MS-25 spacecraft with the first female cosmonaut from Belarus, Marina Vasilevskaya, at the Baikonur Cosmodrome.

In the distant years of cadets, getting acquainted with samples of modern military equipment and weapons of that time, I first experienced indescribable admiration for the designers who realised their ideas in drawings, specialists capable of creating materials for elements of future equipment, professional workers making parts on machine tools, assemblers who brilliantly connect components and assemblies into one whole.

And forty-seven years later, on March 18th, 2024, at the Baikonur Cosmodrome, I was lucky enough to again experience the same emotions of admiration for the limitless possibilities of the human mind, its ability to create such incredibly complex and advanced technical solutions as a launch vehicle with a manned spacecraft, capable of successfully delivering astronauts to the International Space Station.

Everything related to the preparation and launch of launch vehicles is determined not only by numerous and multi-page instructions and strict regulations, but also by unwritten rules — traditions dating back to the first human flights into space.

One of these traditions is the removal of the rocket from the assembly and testing building at exactly 7.00 local time. It is characteristic that the product was delivered to the launch site by the TEM 2U diesel locomotive, built at the Bryansk Machine-Building Plant in the eighties of the last century. It is noteworthy that the railway of the Baikonur Cosmodrome dates back to 1955, and in 2024 it will turn 79 years old.

On the eve of the launch, scheduled for 16.21 on March 21st, the state commission approved the crew of the manned spacecraft Soyuz MS-25 with the call signal 'Kazbek', which included the first female cosmonaut from Belarus Marina Vasilevskaya, NASA astronaut Tracy Dyson and Roscosmos cosmonaut, a native of Belarus Oleg Novitsky. The backups were confirmed: NASA astronaut Donald Pettit, Belarusian Anastasia





Lenkova and Roscosmos cosmonaut Ivan Vagner.

On the same day, a pre-launch press conference was held for members of the main and backup crews, during which participants and journalists, in accordance with quarantine restrictions, communicated through a glass partition.

On the morning of March 21st, to the touching words of the song Grass Near the House by the Earthlings band, members of the main and backup crews left the Kosmonavt hotel to the buses heading to the cosmodrome. Before leaving the hotel, the astronauts left their signatures with the date of their flight into space.

The astronauts were seen off by their relatives and friends, among whom were Marina's parents, Vitaly and Irina Vasilevsky.

After fitting the spacesuits, the crew commander reported to the Chairman of the State Commission that they were ready for the flight, and the cosmonauts left for the launch pad on the Zvezdny bus.

Unfortunately, the automation cancelled the engine start and the rocket did not launch. The faces of those present on the observation deck showed far from joyful emotions. But none of us could imagine what the astronauts felt at that moment...

The crew left the Soyuz MS-25 spacecraft and returned to the quarantine they had been in before the flight. On March 22nd, classes were held with crew members, which, in addition to the stated educational goals, had the goal of distracting the cosmonauts from extraneous experiences.

Due to the fact that the situation with the postponement of the launch day was abnormal, changes were also required to the established regulations for the pre-launch and take-off days for participants in the upcoming flight. The crew members did not review the film White Sun of the Desert, did not leave new autographs on March 23rd at the hotel, etc.

However, the lines from the song of the Earthlings: '...and we don't dream





about the roar of the cosmodrome, not this icy blue, but we dream about grass, grass near the house, green, green grass...' were heard again as the cosmonauts left the hotel to go to the cosmodrome. Oleg Novitsky again reported to the Chairman of the State Commission about the readiness of the crew for the flight.

At 15.36 on March 23rd, the launch vehicle successfully launched from the Baikonur Cosmodrome and on March 25th, the spacecraft docked normally to the Russian module of the international space station.

Viktor **Ivanchikov**



THROUGH THE EYES OF AN EYEWITNESS

WELCOME BACK HOME

On April 11th, a solemn welcoming ceremony for the first Belarusian female cosmonaut, Marina Vasilevskaya, took place at the main air harbour of Belarus — Minsk National Airport.



Despite the cool morning, the emotions of those greeting us were off the charts.

General Director of Belavia Airlines Igor Cherginets met Marina Vasilevskaya at the plane's steps. Girls in Belarusian national costumes presented the astronaut with bread and salt on an embroidered towel. Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus Pyotr Parkhomchik and Chairman of the Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences Vladimir Gusakov presented Marina Vasilevskaya with flowers and escorted her to the airport building. During the passage, students and representatives of public associations warmly and loudly greeted the first envoy of Belarus in space, who had become famous throughout the world.

"I am very happy to set foot on my native land, to fly to the Republic of Belarus on an aircraft, through the window of which I saw our beautiful land. Of course, the scale is larger and it looks more beautiful from space, but it was also beautiful to watch our beautiful fields and beautiful green forests from the airplane window," noted Marina Vasilevskaya. "I am very happy, I thank everyone for their support, for such a welcome. I am very pleased, there are a lot of emotions, and I want today to continue the way it began..."

Viktor **Ivanchikov**
Photo by the author



AN UNFORGETTABLE JOURNEY INTO SPACE



Marina Vasilevskaya talking about the peculiarities of life on the ISS, filming the country from space and what the President said when presenting the Hero of Belarus medal

The film *The Hard Road to Space* was released on April 12th in the evening on Belarus 1. Our colleagues had at their disposal footage of everyday life on the ISS: what conditions the Belarusian Marina Vasilevskaya was in, how she performed scientific experiments, as well as how she slept and what she ate. This was supplemented by an exclusive interview, which the cosmonaut gave at the Palace of Independence immediately after she received the star of the Hero of Belarus from the hands of the President. We present the highlights from the conversation.

About the title of Hero of Belarus

“This is a great honour for me. The most important award of the state. Of course, I let it all pass through myself, through my soul. I am pleased to understand that I can do something for my country. I shed tears of happiness because I had never experienced other such (emotionally strong) moments. Both the launch and landing were perceived in their own way. These are also incredible sensations that cannot be expressed in words. But what happened today (at the ceremony honouring the cosmonauts on April 11th) touched me to the depths of my soul.”

About the words of the President at the time of presentation of the state award

“He told me not to cry and that everything was fine! And that we had a lot of work ahead of us. I understand this perfectly and approach this issue with all responsibility.”

About what, besides our flag, she took with her on board

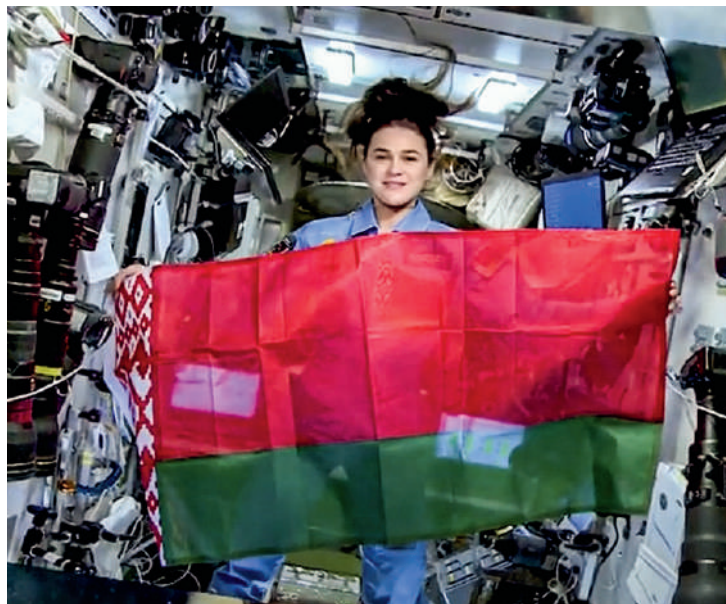
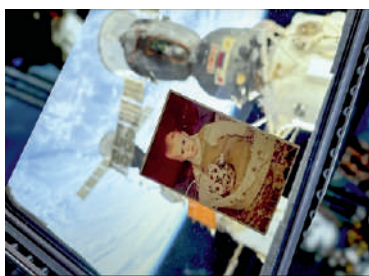
“I took photographs of my family and friends, my notes. I took the Gospel because I am a believer and I know that only with God’s help everything will be fine. And especially since we were there, as the President said, we were a little closer to God. I took our stork in national clothes (a soft toy) — it’s a girl. I took many videos and photos with this stork — as the personification of friendship, love and joy. This stork kept flying away from my cabin, and we caught it, but it was fun. I took a copy of my passport, which I photographed against the backdrop of the Earth. As promised, I stamped the ISS seal with our arrival date — March 25th.”

About unusual moments on the ISS

“Household things on the International Space Station, in space, are not as easy as on Earth. Even the most basic things — drinking water, washing your hair, taking a shower — are impossible. For hygiene there are special wet towels. And all these usual procedures take much more time. Even in the first days, I couldn’t bring myself to grasp that I could let go of something and the object itself would fly to the person. I wanted, as on Earth, to pass it from hand to hand. The only thing you needed was to control yourself when you moved around the module. Because I got beat up pretty bad (laughs). You need to maintain a certain speed. You cannot quickly move through the modules, because if you accelerate too much, you can quickly fly away somewhere. Each module is different: somewhere it’s warm, somewhere it’s cold. Many thanks to Aleksandr Grebenkin (Russian test cosmonaut), he freed up his cabin for me. It’s on the ceiling — if you turn over, it’s at the bottom. Very comfortable. I fly into the sleeping bag, secure myself, zip it up and sleep. Aleksandr himself rested in one module, then in another. Because the ships and locations of the commander and flight engineer changed. I then gave them tea because they were very cold at night.”

About two days between launch and docking with the ISS

“It was an unforgettable two days. This is hard to achieve. Now the technology has advanced so much that astronauts fly into space in three to four hours. But it took us two days; we only docked in the evening. It was incredible because the ship is in a spin. It’s like a bullet



effect. We must be in a certain orbit and in constant rotation. Our Earth was now above, now below, now sunset, now dawn, now shadow, now light. It was so beautiful! I simply admired our planet, its power and strength, its ease. Someone says that our Earth is very small and fragile. It seemed very powerful and strong to me. I liked that we included all the controls in the living quarters plan. We both slept and ate. You sleep very well in space, you fall asleep right away. You wake up one hundred percent rested. I slept there for five or six hours and felt great.”

About how she photographed the Earth

“There is a lot of photo and video equipment at the station. The radiogram says what kind of device I should take: a camera or a video camera, certain settings. We were taught this. For example, we fly over the Republic of Belarus at 13:20 — and we literally have one or two minutes to take photos or videos of the earth’s surface. Of course, this is incredibly interesting. But, unfortunately, the weather now is very cloudy. And no matter how hard I tried... But I photographed Belovezhskaya Pushcha.”

About the phone on the ISS

“You couldn’t take a phone, and there was no point in doing so: you can’t use the Internet there, but photos and videos can be taken with very high-quality equipment.”

About the will to fly after the cancellation of the first launch

“We went through every emergency situation that was possible. Of course, we didn’t go through with the cancellation of the launch. This was unexpected for everyone, but this situation showed the reliability of Russian space rocket technology, which cancelled the launch literally in 20 seconds. And I think it’s good that this happened on Earth and it could be corrected. I was more worried about my family and friends, about you, about the Belarusians who came so far to support us, who were waiting for the rocket to launch, but the rocket didn’t launch. That is, we were more worried about our relatives. We calmly accepted the information that the launch had been postponed. They were expecting evacuation; this was the first time this had happened; the crew had not yet been evacuated from the rocket.”

About space traditions

“Traditions are really important, because they date back to the times of Yuri Alekseyevich Gagarin, and everyone follows them so that the start is successful. There is a tribute to tradition. We also planted a tree in Baikonur, which was very symbolic and a great honour for me — to plant a tree on the Alley of Cosmonauts. The whole crew also watched the film *White Sun of the Desert*. And all the other traditions were followed, everything was done as it should be. And twice.”

Alexander **Pimenov**



TO THE RESEARCH TREASURY

The two-week flight of the first cosmonaut of sovereign Belarus, Marina Vasilevskaya, will certainly bring tangible practical benefits to the country. Confirming the image of a space power is only one side of the coin: on board the station, our compatriot carried out scientific research and experiments, in the interests of both Belarus and Russia.

EXPERIMENTS IN ZERO GRAVITY

“Her flight is a new level of participation in space programmes, I repeat, of sovereign Belarus and a new level of allied, very kind, fraternal relations between Belarus and Russia, our peoples.” This was the assessment of Marina Vasilevskaya’s expedition given by President Aleksandr Lukashenko during the ceremony ceremony honouring Belarusian cosmonauts. The scientific programme was developed by the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus together with Roscosmos and the Russian Academy of Sciences and included seven targeted works, including five research and two educational projects.

Scientific research was carried out in the field of biology, physiology, autonomous operation of space stations, remote sensing of the Earth using Belarusian photo and video spectral equipment located on the ISS.

First. The survey of test natural objects on the territory of Belarus was carried out using equipment produced by the Research Institute of Applied Physical Problems named after A. N. Sevchenko of the BSU simultaneously with the survey of atmospheric characteristics by ground-based sounding equipment produced by the Institute of Physics of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. The information obtained will be used to calibrate the imaging equipment of the domestic BKA satellite and the Russian Kanopus-V satellites.

Second. The complex of lactoferrin and probiotics was activated, and the resulting mixture was exposed to space flight conditions. Now it is already on Earth for further study. Scientists will find out to what extent the beneficial properties of probiotic strains of lactic acid microorganisms

and bifidobacteria have been preserved. Today, great hopes are placed on the results obtained. It is possible that in the future, fermented milk products will be produced on board the ISS and the Russian orbital station, and also used during flights into deep space.

Third. Samples of microorganisms were collected from the internal surfaces of the habitable compartment of the Russian segment of the ISS, as well as the samples of the skin and mucous membranes of the upper respiratory tract of the Belarusian cosmonaut for subsequent research on Earth. Samples of the microflora present on board the station were collected and delivered to Earth. This is necessary to study the effects of microgravity and cosmic radiation on humans.

Fourth. The Russian side provided a 4D bioprinter, on which, in accordance with Russian methods, studies were carried out on the possibility of the formation and crystallization of organic and inorganic materials under orbital flight conditions. The data obtained will be used for physiological studies in preparation for long-distance space flights.

Fifth. A technique has been developed for applying the effects of negative pressure on the lower half of the body under conditions of a short-term orbital flight. For what? You may not believe it, but it was in order to prepare astronauts for being on the Moon. In addition, new data were obtained on the restructuring of the astronaut’s gravity-dependent physiological systems and the possibility of relieving the negative effects of blood redistribution. In this regard, scientists will undertake new research in the field of gravitational physiology.

Alexey Fedotov

FROM A COMMON



During the working visit of the President of Belarus to the Russian Federation, Aleksandr Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin, in a one-on-one format, also spoke about key issues of further development of bilateral cooperation, including the implementation of decisions of the Supreme State Council of the Union State, held in January this year in St. Petersburg. They also discussed the regional and international situation, coordination of actions to respond to existing challenges and threats.

Sovereignty is not an obstacle to cooperation

The President of Belarus speaks of the Union State as a unique association. Belarus and Russia really managed to create an integration model in which each country retains its sovereignty. Moreover, today there is no longer an area where the parties do not cooperate. We reached Antarctica and space.

Aleksandr Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin meet regularly, hold many hours of negotiations, and communicate by phone to compare notes on current issues of bilateral cooperation. So this time the meeting lasted until late in the evening.

The head of the Russian state, welcoming his Belarusian colleague, first of all noted the successful development of economic relations between Russia and Belarus, “Last year we demonstrated good economic growth rates, and now everything is on the rise. Diversification is developing, cooperation is growing.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko thanked Vladimir Putin for his support in the supply of Belarusian goods through Russian ports, “We are working. Looking at other ports. Russian port workers help us ship products. In short, there is no such thing as goods lying on the ocean or seashore that we cannot take out. We work in St. Petersburg, Murmansk, and in the Far East. We have already supplied goods along the Northern Sea Route.

SENSE PERSPECTIVE

Several thousand tons have already been delivered. Very convenient for our manufacturers. Therefore, your support here was very important and relevant for us.”

As for mutual trade, at the end of 2023, Belarus and Russia reached a new historical maximum. The annual trade turnover exceeded \$53 billion, with a positive balance for Belarus. This is largely the result of the implementation of 28 Union programmes, within the framework of which fundamental decisions were made. Minsk and Moscow have seriously taken up import substitution projects, setting the strategic goal of achieving technological sovereignty.

As Aleksandr Lukashenko will emphasise, Belarus and Russia managed to overcome sanctions pressure. And today there is a market, resources, and reserves for cooperation with friendly countries to continue dynamic development.

“We understand what needs to be done,” noted the President of Belarus. “Those loans that were allocated for joint projects by Russia (100 billion roubles), 81 billion, are already starting to work. And we build factories, and so on. We were worried about chips and microchips, but we’re getting by. We are starting to develop our own. I think we can easily get out of this situation. As I once said, we need a little time, and we will solve the problems that need to be solved together with Russia. I would like the Ukrainians to be with us. I feel that the moment is not far off when Ukraine will come to its senses and understand where its happiness lies.”

“Let them decide for themselves,” concluded Vladimir Putin.

Who doesn't need peace in Ukraine

The situation in Ukraine, as expected, became one of the central topics at the negotiations. Vladimir Putin, in particular, emphasised the role of Belarus and Aleksandr Lukashenko personally in attempts to peacefully resolve this conflict, “We have never given up on peaceful resolution of disputes. We did not start this war in 2014. Then, when everything became heated, it was you who initiated the peace negotiations in Belarus. We started, then moved to Istanbul. There they practically completed this work and initialled the document. Then, under pressure from the West, Ukraine abandoned



these agreements, demanding the withdrawal of Russian troops from Kyiv. As soon as we did this, our agreements were thrown into the trash. Now they are proposing to hold some kind of conference in Switzerland. We are not invited there. But at the same time they say that nothing can be solved without us. And since we are not going there, they say that we refuse to negotiate.”

“If they want to talk about peace in Ukraine in Switzerland without us, God help them,” Aleksandr Lukashenko reacted. “Our position is that they can only agree there on how to intensify the escalation of the conflict. Without Russia, what kind of peace process can there be? There can be no peace process. Maybe they are



right that they do not invite us there, because what is there to talk to them about? If they are trying to gather more than a hundred states there and dictate something to us or persuade us, these are not proposals for peace negotiations.”

“I think that to a certain extent they put themselves into a corner when they refused to negotiate in the hope of defeating Russia on the battlefield and inflicting a strategic defeat on it. Now they understand that this is impossible,” Vladimir Putin continued. “They refused to negotiate and now find themselves in a rather difficult situation. Our goal is not to put everyone in a difficult position. We are ready to work constructively. But, of course, there can be no position imposed on us.”

The President of Belarus fully supports the position of the current Russian leadership on the peace process in this conflict, “I absolutely support it! Today there is

everything to sit down and negotiate. They don’t want to — it’s clear why they don’t want to. If they want to talk about peace overseas, then in Ukraine this voice will be heard. Therefore, Ukrainians should know, especially the population, that this does not depend on us. The ball is on that side.”

Act in one direction

The Head of State confirmed that during the negotiations in Belarus and then in Istanbul, serious progress was achieved that suited both Moscow and Kyiv. But then the West forced Zelenskyy to abandon this document, “They arrived and said: come on, fight until the last Ukrainian. In this case, I absolutely support the peace process, which Russia has never abandoned, including today. If we can play any role in this, you know our capabilities, we will always be there. And we will act in the same vein as you.” The President of Belarus proposed returning to previous agreements, “Take out the document that you once showed and handed me, put it on the table and move along it.”

Stand shoulder to shoulder

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that at one time some in Russia reproached Vladimir Putin for not striking at pain points in Ukraine, in particular the energy system, “You said then (maybe not in a military way) that you felt sorry for the people. Kindergartens, schools. If the energy sector in Ukraine had collapsed, children and people would have suffered.”

According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, the West and the Ukrainian side, following the path of escalation of the conflict, are acting extremely short-sightedly, “Because summer passes quickly, and winter is a dangerous business. I think the moment is now (my instinct has never deceived me) that your initiatives for the peaceful resolution of the conflict will find a response in Ukraine. They will find it from the military, oddly enough. Here I am ready to stand shoulder to shoulder with you and work in this direction.”

When the lesson doesn’t go well

Continuing the topic of security, the President of Russia asked how things were on the western borders of Belarus. “It’s a difficult situation,” noted Aleksandr Lukashenko. “What worries me most is the policy of the Polish leadership. Why do they need this confrontation? And Lithuanians, Latvians... Firstly, dozens of corpses are thrown across the border. A certain number of migrants go there and they throw them out. They built a fence — they throw corpses to us outside the fence to our border. Now the snow has melted — corpses have been exposed, lying right on the border. There are people



from Afghanistan, from Iran, from Africa. Well, why kill people and throw them away like a barbarian? This creates tension. They closed the border for you and for us. It's very hard to work. And even the Chinese, Kazakhs with Poles and others. There are crazy queues at the border. They do this on purpose. We did not close the border to them. We have visa-free travel for our neighbours. So they don't let their people come here due to the fact that we can 'recruit' them. As a specialist, you have probably 'recruited' quite a few people. Is this how people are captured and 'recruited' at the border? They are conducting exercises... We are standing head-on on the border. The Americans were transferred, the Germans, which is surprising. The lesson did not go well. We, of course, were forced to deploy our units and oppose them. I don't know why they need this. We are not going to fight anywhere. They are shouting that Lukashenko and Putin will take over Europe tomorrow. Such plans were never discussed that we wanted to capture someone. There are enough problems of our own. Nonsense!"

"Nonsense needed by the ruling circles in order to explain and justify their expenses for the war in Ukraine. There are no other reasons," commented Vladimir Putin.

FIGURES AND FACTS ABOUT COOPERATION BETWEEN BELARUS AND RUSSIA

- ♦ In 2023, trade in goods between our countries amounted to 47.65 billion dollars, the volume of trade in services amounted to 5.64 billion (compared to 2022, an increase of more than 5 and 13 percent, respectively). In January — February 2024, trade turnover approached \$7.7 billion.
- ♦ Last year, 6 programmes and 33 events were implemented in various areas. In 2024, five joint programmes and 37 events will be financed from the budget of the Union State.
- ♦ Belarus has concluded more than 80 cooperation agreements with 73 regions of the Russian Federation.
- ♦ In 2023, 129 visits of Belarusian delegations to Russian regions were organised. Belarus was visited by 36 delegations from regions of the Russian Federation led by governors.
- ♦ In June 2023, following the results of the 10th Forum of Regions in Ufa, about 100 cooperation agreements of various levels were signed, contracts worth about \$1.3 billion were concluded.

Vladimir **Khromov**

"Russia really needs us today, just as Russia needs us"

Upon arrival in the Kremlin, the President of Belarus, Russian journalists, as is tradition, were very active with questions. And that's what the discussion was about.

"Space is ours! Yours and ours!"

First of all, they asked about the main event of the last days — the successful completion of the 21st expedition to the ISS and the historic flight of the first cosmonaut in the history of sovereign Belarus, Marina Vasilevskaya.

"Congratulations! Space is yours, as we understand it?" the question was asked.

"Space is ours! Yours and ours! Thanks to you, it became ours. Although Belarusians also flew in Soviet times. Therefore, the fact that the girl flew was ours... But we are preparing a few more girls. They say that our girls are stronger, so we are preparing to infiltrate the Russian programme and work together in space."

"We can help in this regard." About the readiness to provide assistance in possible negotiations between Moscow and Kyiv

Journalists also asked how now, after the terrorist attack in Crocus City Hall, we should talk to Zelenskyy's Kyiv regime? "You don't talk to them and you're unlikely to talk to them," noted Aleksandr Lukashenko. "If you need us to step in and help, we can help you in this regard. But I don't see any point in trying to talk to them there somehow. Why would you crawl in front of someone and ask to talk about Crocus? Now we need to fully understand this.

Ukrainians are Ukrainians, but behind the Ukrainians (you correctly discovered) there are certain forces. You know

them too. These are the ones you need to talk to. And the Ukrainians here 'brought cartridges'."

"I don't see the need yet." About the creation of a sanitary zone on the border with Ukraine

"After the elections, Vladimir Putin said that a sanitary zone may be required to ensure the security of Russian border regions. Do you need one?" the journalists continued the Ukrainian theme.

"No, I don't see the need for such a zone yet. We work there very seriously. As for the sanitary zone between Ukraine and Russia, it still needs to be created. These are not easy questions. I think that a lot will depend not only on the warring countries, but also on Western states. There is a serious problem there — Ukraine, and they already admit it. I would not like the West to continue this escalation in Ukraine. And escalation means the supply of weapons and ammunition. Now they have started talking about transferring their military to Ukraine. Most likely, to the border to Belarus. We wait. Let them transfer it."

"There is no such need and there never will be." About the calls for Belarus to engage in hostilities with Ukraine

The President was asked how he assessed the likelihood that Belarus would have to engage in hostilities with Ukraine. The answer was, "I don't rate it at all. There is no such need and



there never will be. Russia now needs a Belarus like this — peaceful, quiet, calm, which does its job. Everyone does their own thing. But I say frankly: neither I nor Putin want our brotherly Ukrainian people to suffer. We do not want this!” In this regard, Aleksandr Lukashenko mentioned Russia’s attacks on energy facilities in Ukraine, noting that this was a response to a similar attack from the Ukrainian side, “Ukrainians must understand: if they drop UAVs on objects such as an oil refinery, the answer will arrive instantly tenfold. Well, why provoke and kindle this fire? Why is it needed? And at the same time they talk about some kind of peaceful negotiations and conference in Switzerland. They want peace in Ukraine without Russia. Read it as in without China. The representative of China is also not going to fly or go there. What kind of peace negotiations can there be?”

Returning to the question of Belarus’s entry into hostilities, Aleksandr Lukashenko drew attention to the fact that ‘hurry patriots’ in Russia, as they are called in the Russian media, sometimes call for this.

“These calls are benefit NATO. It is they who want and are doing everything to drag us into a war with Ukraine,” the Belarusian leader emphasised.

Aleksandr Lukashenko explained that in this case, the length of the front due to the border of Belarus with Ukraine, Poland and the Baltic countries will increase by thousands of

kilometres, “You and I will have to close this front if we enter the war. Can we do this? We can’t. Do we want problems for ourselves? We do not want. This is secondly. Firstly, maybe Ukraine, just like Russia today, will benefit from such a Belarus (peaceful). That is, if we entered the war against Ukraine today, it would not achieve anything. Because their border with Belarus is barricaded so that you can’t go there. It is completely mined, concreted, and there are 120 thousand Ukrainian troops on this border. Well, they want to throw them to the front against Russia, and put the French here. We are waiting. The French will defend Ukraine... Listen! This is all talk. No French will go there, and no one will defend there. They are trying to intimidate us with Putin. And the fact that Belarus will enter the war and so on is from the same opera that Putin and I ‘want to take over Europe tomorrow’. This is nonsense, a complete lie. We never even discussed this issue.”

“It’s out of desperation.” About the mobilization of women into the army

“How do you feel about the mobilization of women?” the reporters did not let up, referring to the proposals made in this regard in Ukraine.

“Very negative. Women should go into space. And if they really want to join the army, fine, let them serve.”

Vladimir **Velikhov**



CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE

A meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CMFA) of the member countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States was held in Minsk

It is symbolic that the Ministerial Council in Minsk was held exactly on Cosmonautics Day, which, in fact, became possible thanks to the combined efforts of all the republics of the former USSR in the space race. In the capital of Belarus, lavishly decorated with bright posters depicting the broadly smiling Belarusian Marina Vasilevskaya, who recently returned to Earth, and the slogans 'Space is ours!'; this is felt especially clearly.

Taking into account modern realities

However, the Commonwealth, which united almost all post-Soviet republics after the collapse of the Soviet Union, today faces not space, but completely earthly challenges. Their clear manifestation at the current Ministerial Council was the intrigue with Armenia's participation in the ministerial meeting. Yerevan, which, due to the changing political situation, has recently been taking public steps to distance itself from integration and other associations of post-Soviet countries, refrained from sending the head of the Armenian Foreign Ministry Ararat Mirzoyan to Minsk. However, the Armenian flag was present at the ministerial meeting in Minsk, and the republic was represented by Deputy Foreign Minister Mnatsakan Safaryan. As is known, even earlier, Ukraine and Moldova, which retained formal membership in the organisation, began to skimp on their participation in meetings under the auspices of the CIS. However, on the façade of the Commonwealth Executive Committee located in the centre of Minsk, both the Ukrainian and Moldovan flags calmly coexist with the flags of the other members of the association. All this indicates the interest of these countries in maintaining participation in the CIS, despite all the current disagreements. Why? If only because the Commonwealth, even in the current difficult geopolitical situation, not only maintains, but also successfully develops its constructive potential. And not only in the 'soft' areas of humanitarian and cultural cooperation, but also in quite practical areas of economics and security.

The latter, in light of the threats from international terrorism, was paid special attention by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus Sergei Aleynik, who received guests in Minsk. "Innocent people suffer from terrorism and its international component, regardless of nationality, ethnicity or religious affiliation. And in this context, we, as statesmen, must put aside emotions and look for ways to



jointly counter common challenges," said the head of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry.

Participants of the Council of Foreign Ministers honoured the memory of those killed in the terrorist attack in the Crocus City Hall near Moscow with a minute of silence, expressed solidarity with Russia, pointed out the need to consolidate efforts to combat terrorism and opposed attempts to drive a wedge between the Commonwealth countries using terrorist attacks.

Meet national interests

The event in the Belarusian capital was chaired by the head of the Russian Foreign Ministry Sergei Lavrov. Following the meeting, a number of important documents and statements were adopted. This clearly confirms that the CIS, which has been repeatedly called by septsics a platform for a 'civilized divorce of post-Soviet countries', demonstrates its viability and continues to meet the national interests of the participants in the integration organisation, whom life itself is pushing to consolidate efforts, especially after many illusions and hopes from the 'post-Soviet divorce' faced a harsh geopolitical reality.

As Sergei Lavrov recalled, Russia has been presiding over the CIS since January 1st of this year, and the main place in the country's priorities is "promoting the integration agenda in all directions." Yes, significant attention during the meeting in Minsk was paid to security issues in the CIS and the wider Eurasian space. The topic of migration



was also raised and two documents reflecting the common approaches of the CIS were adopted — on the safety of work of journalists and on interaction between the CIS and the UN. In addition, the CMFA participants agreed to establish a single anniversary medal ‘80 years of Victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945’, the obverse of which will depict a Red Army soldier raising the flag, and the reverse will feature the St. George ribbon. A medal for a memorable event that unites the Commonwealth will serve as an incentive to consolidate a sense of patriotism and anti-fascist position among the population of the Commonwealth countries.

Answering questions from journalists later, Sergei Lavrov confirmed that external forces are trying to interfere with integration processes in the post-Soviet space, and this topic was also raised during the Ministerial Council of the CIS member countries held in the capital of Belarus. “Everyone understands perfectly well: the United States and its satellites are trying to invade all regions of our common space. They are trying to undermine agreements on stabilising the situation in the South Caucasus, to penetrate into Central Asia. They are creating various formats that are openly aimed against the Russian Federation,” the minister explained, noting that “our allies and strategic partners are under enormous pressure, but at the same time remain committed to the basic principles on which cooperation within the CIS is based.”

The most important topics on the agenda

The ministers noted: it is necessary to strengthen the exchange of information. At the same time, the level of consolidation in this direction is already high. However, Minsk adopted a joint statement on ensuring safe working conditions for journalists. The rights of media workers will be protected in the Commonwealth. “We are extremely interested in ensuring that our activities are reported and reported objectively. During the discussion of this topic, we just drew attention to how the freedom of the media in the West is being violated. The restrictions that are being introduced for many news agencies, television companies of the Russian Federation, and the Republic of Belarus, of course, do not fit into the norms of democratic behaviour,” said Sergei Lebedev, Secretary General of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Indeed, security and economics are topics that, according to Belarusian Foreign Minister Sergei Aleynik, represent the main potential for cooperation within the Commonwealth. During a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the CIS, the head of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry emphasised that the sanctions have grown into full-fledged economic aggression. They have long ceased to be selective. Actually, they talk about this less and less, declaring real goals: to impede economic development and eliminate competitors, impoverish the population, provoke discontent and unrest. In this regard, Sergei Aleynik noted



the fundamental importance of economic cooperation within the CIS. And work in this area is carried out on a systematic basis. Difficulties promote discipline: the GDP of the CIS countries last year grew by an average of 4 percent compared to 2022, when the figure was minus 0.2 percent. The volume of trade turnover within the CIS increased by 3.1 percent over the past year. And over the past eight years it has doubled. These results are a real team effort. And it is very important, says Sergei Aleynik, to maintain this positive trend this year,

Undoubtedly, security issues are especially relevant today. According to Sergei Aleynik, Belarus in the CIS invariably advocates that this issue remains the focus of attention. The head of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry explained why. Because, in his opinion, the architecture of global and regional security is in fact in ruins, and they are openly relying on the factor of force. There is simply no room left for diplomatic tools. Hypothetically, each of the burning hotbeds on the planet could become the forerunner of the next global explosion.

Useful exchange of views

During the meeting, the heads of foreign affairs agencies adopted a number of documents. Thus, the ministers agreed to declare the city of Ganja (Azerbaijan) the sports capital of the Commonwealth in 2025, and the city of Almaty (Kazakhstan) in 2026. The foreign ministers also agreed on documents for consideration by the heads of state. In particular, we are talking about the establishment of a single anniversary medal '80 years of Victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945' and the draft Convention on the Legal Status of Delegations Sent to Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

A productive and frank dialogue, an exchange of views in the widest format — this is how the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergei Lavrov described the event. The head of the Russian Foreign Ministry is confident that the meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the CIS once again demonstrated that the Commonwealth countries have similar assessments and have many points of contact. Sergei Lavrov emphasised that he considers the CIS as one of the key elements of the system of regional cooperation and security on the Eurasian continent. And as the chairman state of the CIS this year, Russia will continue to develop and improve interaction mechanisms in the Commonwealth format to increase the practical impact of its activities.

The collective West is actively pushing the Commonwealth to become even stronger. CIS Secretary General Sergei Lebedev drew attention to this when talking to journalists, "Under the conditions of sanctions pressure, those unfounded measures limiting contacts and mutually beneficial cooperation with Western countries, we are simply forced to interact more closely. This meets both our desires and our needs. The facts indicate that we are now intensifying our interaction."

By the way, the next meeting of the foreign ministers of the CIS countries was agreed to be held in Moscow on October 7th, 2024. Now the countries are preparing for a meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the CIS. The agenda for the meeting is being discussed. It will take place in May. Finally, in Minsk it was agreed that on October 8th Moscow will host a summit of the heads of state of the CIS, on the eve of which a meeting of the foreign ministers of the Commonwealth countries will be held.

Vladimir **Khromov**



TIME FOR ACTIVE ACTIONS

Despite all the obstacles, over the past three years the country has managed to increase industrial production by almost half. And last year the export of such products reached a record figure for the last decade - \$6.5 billion. However, the focus of the President's April meeting was not on achievements, but on those problems that require immediate solutions.

Quality as the main component

The Head of State had a principled and very demanding conversation about the main goal and strategic task for the industrial complex. As a result, the President, in a set of priority measures, instructed to build reliable protection against any external factors. What are the elements of this protection? First of all, maximum technological independence, import substitution, market diversification, trained personnel and the strictest discipline. But all this, Aleksandr Lukashenko believes, makes no sense without

the main component – the impeccable quality of the final product. The President is categorical that the current times require the strictest discipline and the most active actions from everyone. And in the Year of Quality, the manufactured products must be at the highest level more than ever. “And there is no other way. This is not a whim, but a harsh necessity of life. The matter of the future of the country and people. Our products must be of high quality in all characteristics and parameters,” concludes Aleksandr Lukashenko.

About three hundred people – senior officials, members of the Government, governors, directors of enterprises, heads of banks, scientific centres, heads of administrations of free economic zones – took part in the meeting, which took place in the Palace of Independence. In such a representative composition, the future of the Belarusian industry was essentially discussed from the point of view of both tactics and strategy. And not just anyone, but the President, identified a number of areas that require special attention.

Indeed, it follows from the Government reports that, in general, the Ministry of Industry has been ensuring stable growth in production volumes over the past few years. In three years they grew by almost 40 percent. There was a result last year too. Industrial products manufactured were approximately 30 billion roubles, the growth rate was almost 113 percent. We began to produce more electronics, cars and trucks, and combine harvesters. Planar, INTEGRAL and BelOMO have fully formed a portfolio of export orders for the current year and even partially for 2025. However, not everything is so smooth for other industrial giants. In particular, production volumes of refrigerators, tractors, loaders, and engines decreased. And this despite the fact that the country has many years of experience in the machine tool industry – the most important industry in any industrial economy. Nevertheless, the President asks, where is the use of modern technologies, such as artificial intelligence and robotics? After all, they provide high precision and productivity in materials processing, resource savings, cost reduction and product quality.

Attention to the far arc

At the meeting, attention was drawn to the fact that in recent years the foreign trade of organisations of the Ministry of Industry has been characterised, on the one hand, by an increase in export supplies, and on the other, by a forced withdrawal from Western markets. In 2023, the industry generated a record export of \$6.5 billion over the past decade. The increase to the 2022 level is almost half a billion (8 percent). Moreover, exports have been steadily increasing for three years in a row. This means that the industry was able to neutralise the negative trends of 2019–2020. Supplies are reoriented to the markets of friendly countries. First of all, to the traditional market of Russia and other CIS countries. The Head of State is convinced that the key goal today is export diversification.

Based on this, the situation in non-CIS countries cannot but cause concern. Sales to these regions were less than 20 percent compared to pre-sanction 2021. Plans for export to friendly countries in the far arc have not been fulfilled. At the same time, in Africa, Latin America, and Asia today there is a huge demand for industrial products. It is there that you need to work closely and occupy your niches. And above all on the African continent. Food security is one of the vital issues for Africa. Therefore, agricultural machinery and equipment are especially in demand there.



And this circumstance must be taken full advantage of, the President believes. According to the Head of State, today there are agreements on the supply of over 3 thousand tractors, 80 harvesters and 30 dump trucks to Zimbabwe. More than 150 tractors – to the Togolese Republic. In 2024, it is planned to supply equipment to Nicaragua, Vietnam, Iran, and Pakistan. But the President believes that we need to go further and expand cooperation. And understand that the strategic task is to create joint assembly plants of Belarusian equipment in supporting countries.

New market trends

There is another objective reality, which, by the way, is not very pleasant and even alarming in its own way. It was also discussed at the meeting. And it concerns the state of affairs in the key Russian market. Despite the fact that more than 90 percent of products go to the Russian market, traditional Belarusian goods, which have always been in demand for their quality and reliability, have recently been losing ground there. The Head of State cited indicative figures: the export of Belarusian tractors in 2023 decreased by 18 percent, the share of Belarusian tractors in Russian imports dropped to the lowest level in the last decade, 10.6 percent, and trucks – to 6 percent. The same trends are emerging at Atlant: export volumes of refrigerators and freezers, which were in demand only yesterday, have decreased by almost half.



Aleksandr Lukashenko recalled the fact that Vladimir Putin announced in his annual message that by 2030 the constituent entities of the federation should receive about 40 thousand buses, trolleybuses, trams, and electric buses. Money is provided for this. In this regard, Aleksandr Lukashenko outlined a specific goal, “The task of the Belarusian industry is to connect and provide at least 30 percent of the required volumes. This is our niche. You just have to roll up your sleeves and work.”

At the meeting, it was emphasised that the country can create competitive equipment using domestic materials and components, however, in a number of areas, the updating of products and production is also slow. Each critical position shows weaknesses, and it is precisely at these points that competitors then hit with sanctions, the President noted. And he set a number of important tasks for the meeting participants. First of all, it is necessary to take measures to ensure maximum technological independence and create conditions for the sustainable operation of the economy, not dependent on any sanctions. And this is a strategic task for the industrial complex. It is necessary to build reliable protection against any external factors – another task for

everyone. This is why import substitution is so vitally important and must be pursued constantly. The Head of State once again reminded that this is the priority of priorities. Meanwhile, we have to admit that the industry's turn in this direction is still slow. The share of imported components in Belarusian products is still high.

The priorities are well known

At the meeting, attention was drawn to the risks posed by dependence on foreign equipment and software.

Therefore, the creation of domestic software and its implementation should become an absolute priority for domestic developers.

Another goal for solving existing problems is to strengthen the integration of industry with science and the development of high-tech industries. In these conditions, the implementation of programmes of the Union State of Belarus and Russia, joint import substitution projects that create the basis for technological sovereignty and economic security, becomes especially important.

In general, the strategic task is to achieve technological sovereignty in cross-cutting areas that ensure the sustainability of the entire country's economy. These are means of production, machine tools, robotics. Projects to achieve technological sovereignty should become the engine of industrial renewal and help the entire economy reach advanced levels of efficiency and competitiveness. As a result, the Government has been instructed to work out and formulate a long-term order from Russian partners for high-tech products at least until the end of this decade, so that our enterprises understand what rules they should follow to work in Russia.

The key issue is ensuring product quality and proper service. Message from the President, “In the Year of Quality (and always) the manufactured products must be at the highest level. And there is no other way. This is not a

whim, but a harsh necessity of life. The matter of the future of the country and people. Our products must be of high quality in all characteristics and parameters. We must reach approximately the Japanese level of quality. The goal is to gain a foothold and increase market share.”

Personnel is crucial

The President did not hide the problem of providing the industrial sector with qualified personnel. Everything is important: investment, technology, discipline, product quality. But the most important factor is personnel. They solve all these problems. A highly qualified specialist will solve any problem, a dropout will ruin the matter. According to the President, today in the republic as a whole, of the 27 thousand vacancies in the manufacturing industry, 85 percent are in blue-collar jobs. Mechanics, drivers, machine operators, and welders are in the highest demand. At Minsk Automobile Plant, the shortage of workers is 13 percent. At the Minsk Motor Plant there is a turnover of working specialties: mechanics, turners, installers, electricians, grinders and milling operators.

The question arises: how to increase the material interest of workers in enterprises? And how does their leadership intend to solve this problem? Are there not enough workers? Maybe the time has come for the Government to think about attracting retired pensioners. Among them there are many active people who want to work. It may not amount to 30 thousand people, but we will find several thousand patriotic people whom we can invite to production. They will be happy to come, work and be of great benefit as mentors. In other words, the President noted, it is necessary to decide how to interest them, including financially.

Make way for the young

At the meeting, the issue of securing young specialists in the field was raised. According to the President, it seems that the negative trend in this part could not be reversed. Moreover, experts warn that the risks of losing competencies in the field of design and development of new types of products are growing, because at most enterprises there are few young specialists in the design and development departments. And this is an issue to resolve not only for the Ministry of Industry, but also for the Ministry of Education, Aleksandr Lukashenko drew attention. And he fundamentally stated, “It is not enough to change the approach to training qualified specialists in blue-collar and technical professions. Based on the experience of the

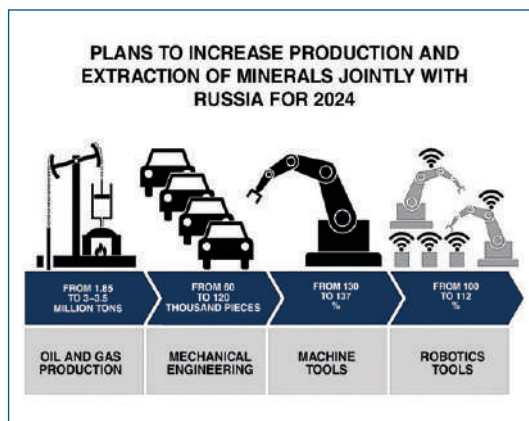
Soviet past, we must significantly raise the prestige of the engineering professions, raise the status of those people whose hands and intellect create real material values.” The Head of State is convinced that it is necessary to actually strengthen the connection of all levels of education, from school, university to enterprise, and for everyone to work for a common result.

Challenges in difficult times

Subsequently, Aleksandr Lukashenko called on the meeting participants to voice not only conclusions and problems, but also their proposals. The discussion turned out to be active and lively.

Of course, the most difficult task for the engineering industry is maintaining and strengthening the competitiveness of products in the domestic and foreign markets. This point of view was expressed by the Chairman of the Presidium of the

National Academy of Sciences, Vladimir Gusakov. Belarusian products, he is convinced, should not be inferior in quality to the best foreign analogues. There are no trifles in solving this problem: optimal designs, modern materials with functional properties, surface protection technologies, as well as electronic control and high-tech production, are important. In this regard, Vladimir Gusakov identified a number of key problems, including the need to modernise production. In his opinion, large enterprises need



not only targeted equipment with individual components and assemblies, electronic control systems, but also the preparation of long-term modernisation plans, including scientific and technical audit. The Chairman of the Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences also spoke about the importance of using digital technologies in modern management systems. For example, today almost all mechanical engineering enterprises are mastering digital technologies for designing mechanical engineering products. But to transition to a complete digital production system, it is necessary to create complete digital replicas of machines and production lines. You can't do without this. Vladimir Gusakov also touched upon the topic of modernising the production of mechanical engineering components and critical imports, which, in his opinion, is hampered by an insufficient machine tool base, especially with numerical control. He sees the solution to this problem in the creation or acquisition of a modern machine tool base with control electronics and robotisation of production lines, as well as in import substitution of cutting tools.

Element of technological sovereignty

How many arms were broken in the debate about whether Belarus needs its own agricultural engineering industry. Minister of Agriculture and Food Sergei Bartosh reported that the basis of the machine fleet on farms is made up of Belarusian models. There are 212 thousand units, the number of imported ones is 27 thousand.

One of the priorities for the competitiveness of domestic technology is the price factor. The price is 20-25 percent lower than the Russian one, and two to three times lower than the imported price.

As a positive example, the minister noted the increase in the warranty period for domestic equipment from two to three years, and to five years for energy-intensive equipment from 2024. He also positively assessed the prompt elimination of equipment failures and the provision of replacement vehicles in case of long-term failures.

Sergei Bartosh summed up: domestic technology makes it possible to perform all types of processing operations in the agro-industrial complex. However, increasing the manufacture of agricultural products requires new developments, improvement of previously produced machines and the rapid development of new types of equipment.

Russian vector and its capabilities

Ambassador of Belarus to the Russian Federation Dmitry Krutoy reported on the situation of domestic industrialists on the Russian market. It turns out that the Ministry of Industry here has become our number 1 exporter with a sales volume of about 6 billion dollars. He also visited food manufacturers. This is a quarter of total exports. However, the lion's share of this volume comes from the 'big six' – BELGEE, Byelorussian Steel Works, BELAZ, Minsk Tractor Works, Minsk Automobile Plant and Horizont. They account for 75 percent of the Ministry of Industry's exports to Russia. In total, supplies have increased by \$3 billion in recent years. By the way, for comparison, China increased sales by \$8 billion. Comparing the size of the economies of the two countries, such a balance can be considered a considerable success.

Dmitry Krutoy named passenger transport as one of the promising areas for increasing exports to the Russian Federation. Over five years, they plan to replace 40 percent of the buses, all that are in Russia, 60 percent of trams and 70 percent of trolleybuses (a total of about 65 thousand units of equipment). Based on the target, we should take 30 percent of this increase through special programmes, this is approximately 4.5 thousand units annually. Last year we supplied 1.5 thousand to Russia. That is, for us this is actually a threefold increase, summed up Dmitry Krutoy. According to the ambassador, programmes in the field of water purification, reconstruction and construction of roads, as well as in the housing and utility services sector are also capacious, generously funded areas. Here too there



is room for maneuver for our enterprises. According to Dmitry Krutoy, interaction with Russian state corporations will also have a good effect. Due to sanctions, their ability to purchase various equipment has been reduced. Now they are more willing to consider Belarusian options. A separate topic is the assembly production of Belarusian equipment in Russia. True, it is important to understand whether they will become an additional sales channel for products without giving rise to unnecessary competition.

Aleksandr Lukashenko asked a direct question, "As I understand it, there are no problems on the Russian market, as follows from your speech?"

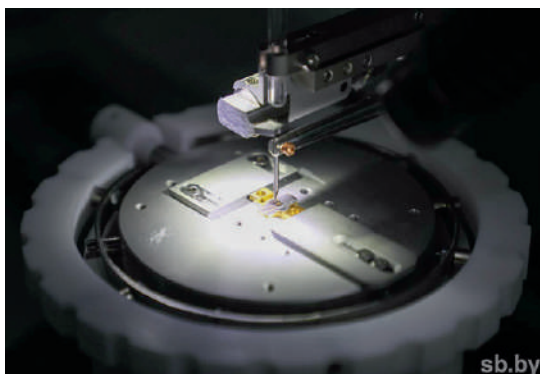
"There are threats," answered Dmitry Krutoy.

The President remarked to this, "There are always threats. The threat of war and so on, so should we stop living? No, we will live... I don't see any problems at all in organising work there. This is the first. Second. Everything that you have listed lies in the plane of the Government and directors. What is the problem? The flexibility of those present here and the Government."

The Head of State recalled that the Ambassador of Belarus to Russia has the status of Deputy Prime Minister and has the right to demand effective actions from members of the Government and monitor their implementation.

About the strategy for the future

Industry Minister Aleksandr Rogozhnik assured the President that appropriate conclusions would be drawn from what was said at the meeting and the situation would be corrected. At the same time, the minister noted the positive dynamics in the industry in recent years. Apart from some product items (tractors, refrigerators, freezers), in all other groups everything that is produced is sold. Aleksandr Rogozhnik elaborated, "While we made 26 thousand Geely cars in 2022, last year we made almost 70 thousand. And everything was sold. This year we reach almost 90 thousand. Every year, starting from 2020, we



have increased our production of harvesters by 500 units. Very good dynamics for the Minsk Automobile Plant.” According to the minister, industry organisations are implementing a strategy for the short term (until 2025) and the long term (until 2030). The largest projects include the modernisation of production at BELAZ, Gomselmash, renewal of production capacities at the Minsk Bearing Plant, Integral and others.

Speaking about development strategy

All reports presented at the meeting were summarised by Prime Minister Roman Golovchenko. First of all, he unequivocally assured the President, “Of course, all additional tasks set at this meeting will be implemented. We still need to find solutions for a number of them, but we accepted your statement unconditionally.”

Roman Golovchenko updated the question posed by the Head of State: what is missing for a qualitative breakthrough? “The question is clear, the answer is simple: there is a lack of innovation and scientific contribution. That is, statistically it seems not bad. Our share of shipped innovative products is 46.5 percent, with a target of 33.5. That is, we fulfill and exceed.”

At the same time, the Prime Minister proposes to change the structure of interaction between science and industry, since now industrial science, represented by specialised institutes and scientific and practical centres, works in isolation from production. Roman Golovchenko believes that such

structures should be transferred to those who can actually benefit from the fruits of their developments.

Speaking about the strategy for the development of the industrial sector as a whole, the Prime Minister outlined specific areas – revenue, cost, quality, sales, personnel and the creation of new high-tech production facilities.

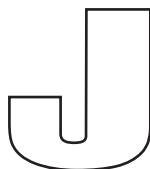
In terms of improving sales, the Prime Minister focused on the far arc, the share of which in the Ministry of Industry’s exports does not yet exceed two percent, “We have approved a programme for the development of cooperation between Belarus and African countries for 2024 – 2026. The goal is to restore the maximum export volume of Belarus, which was once on this continent at 410 million dollars, and then reach 600 million in 2026. The tasks are formed by year in the context of all industries, and the demand for this will be fierce.”

Summarising what has been said, the head of the Government expressed the initiative to develop a unified programme for industrial modernisation and place control over its implementation in the Government. Among specific areas, he identified microelectronics, electric transport and a number of others. Separately, he emphasized interaction in industrial modernization with China. To this end, about a hundred joint potential projects have already been proposed in the fields of automobile, mechanical engineering, machine tool building industries, as well as optics, electronics, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology.

Vladimir **Khromov**



PARTNERSHIP HAS ITS OWN PRAGMATISM



Joint projects of the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation will increase the GDP of Belarus by \$8 billion. Indeed, analysts are voicing this figure today, based on data on the development of cooperative ties between the two countries.

Roadmap for mutual success

Industrial policy, obviously, is at the forefront of cooperation. At the same time, there are still quite a lot of joint reserves in other areas. Where do additional drivers for the development of integration processes lie today? To clarify the situation, let us ask, for example, the following question: what programmes of the Union State have been implemented in recent years? According to the Head of the Representative Office of the Standing Committee of the Union State in Minsk, Marianna Shchetkina, in addition to 28 union programmes for the implementation of which governments are responsible, there are also programmes of the Union State implemented using funds from the union budget. The customers in this case are two countries — Belarus and Russia, their ministries and the Academy of Sciences. So, from 2000 to 2023, more than 80 programmes worth over 65 billion Russian roubles were implemented in areas that, according to politicians and experts, are necessary for the development of the Union State. First of all, we are talking about security and defence. It is not for nothing that this year programmes on border security and military infrastructure are being implemented in the interests of the regional grouping of troops. In total, 19 programmes have already been implemented in this area. In the field of microelectronics and electronics, 18 such programmes have been implemented. According to Marianna Shchetkina, Belarus has preserved an excellent base, developments, scientific school and unique teams. And if you look at the main directions that were adopted at the last Supreme State Council to implement the provisions of the Treaty on the Union State for 2024—2026, it is noted that the industrial policy must necessarily implement a road map in the field of microelectronics. And this is being done today through appropriate programmes. For example, this year, one of the most promising of such programmes is being created to develop intelligent control and protection

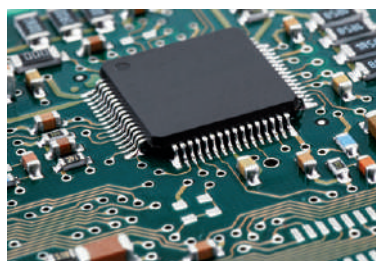
systems for highly automated special-purpose vehicles. There is also a programme within which new technologies for materials and components are being developed.

And, of course, space. The Head of the Representative Office of the Standing Committee of the Union State in Minsk explained that in the space sector, seven joint programmes have been implemented recently. But the space sphere is unique in that it concentrates all the most advanced achievements.

It is worth recalling that Belarus also participated in the space programmes of the Soviet Union. Therefore, the country has created a unique base for the development of the space industry. By the way, this year a promising space programme is being implemented, such as the development of new on-board equipment. Within the framework of this programme, it is planned to create an experimental model of a nanosatellite. On the Belarusian side, the National Academy of Sciences is actively involved in the programme. Due to the fact that the country has preserved developments in the space sector, almost all the filling, the entire, so to speak, substantive part of the experimental model is made in Belarus. And not only the Academy of Sciences is involved in this process, such as, for example, the Research Institute of Physics and the Institute of Heat and Mass Transfer. These are also Centre Research and Production Organisation, Integral, Peleng, and other production and scientific teams. So it turns out that Belarus is already a space power. How can you not be proud of this?

Investments in effective projects

In general, with regard to the development of union programmes, experts note that the main priority of such programmes is their feasibility. Now more than ever, import substitution and technological independence are relevant. Therefore, the most basic condition for new programmes is that the output must be an innovative product. This can



be either intellectual property or a specifically developed modern effective device. And most importantly, new developments must be in the interests of the Union State. That is why it is important that today work in these areas is carried out as comprehensively as possible.

As is known, the budget of union programmes is mainly formed through shared contributions from Belarus and Russia. And if justified projects are announced, funding will always be available. Yes, money loves counting, but investing in effective results is always profitable.

There are union programmes that are already being successfully implemented. A whole series of others, as they say, are on their way out. They have already been considered at meetings by the Russian and Belarusian sides. There are programmes that are launched in a year or two, although they are also actually in progress.

Let us also recall the fact that our country received the status of a nuclear power when the commissioning of two Belarusian NPP units was ensured in 2023. Meanwhile, the issue of the possible construction of a third power unit on the existing site is already being considered. Or, as an option, there is talk about choosing a site for a new nuclear power plant, which will consist of two units. Programmes of joint interaction between specialised organisations of Belarus and Rosatom will also be developed, aimed at implementing not purely energy or nuclear projects, but, for example, nuclear medicine or the construction of a mobile research reactor in our country. That is, we are talking about a whole palette of interaction in a fairly high-tech area.

It is also worth saying that the two countries are implementing an ambitious project in the aircraft industry. As explained by the trade representative of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Belarus, Yuri Zolotarev, a decision has already been made that the assembly of a twin-engine 19-seater aircraft will be ensured in Belarus. This is being done through the 558th plant, which is located in Baranovichi, and the Ural Civil Aviation Plant. The 407th Civil Aviation Plant is also very actively involved in the project in Belarus. Belarusian Deputy Prime Minister Pyotr Parkhomchik once indicated that the first two prototypes would be built by 2026, and by 2030 there would be about 90 aircraft produced. In his opinion, these very significant projects fully characterise the integration process in the format of the Union State.

Offers take into account demand

It is interesting how the structure of exports and imports is changing, which product items are in the top today, which of them are in growing demand in the course of modern trade relations between the two countries.

As for product groups, they, according to Yuri Zolotarev, remained unchanged. If we talk about the main product items that form the basis of Belarusian exports to Russia, these are, first of all, meat and dairy products. Yuri Zolotarev, citing the words of the head of Rosselkhoz nadzor Sergei Dankvert, said that of all imports of meat products to the Russian Federation, half were supplied from our country. According to the trade representative of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Belarus, this is a very good contribution and a



distinctive sign of the integration format, which is the Union State.

In addition to meat and dairy products, according to the trade representative, the list of priority product groups includes vehicles, mechanical engineering products, power equipment, and chemical products. In fact, this is all that makes up the top 5 main items in the product range of Belarusian exports.

In Russia, the leading export component is the products of the fuel and energy complex. The country continues to supply large volumes of oil and gas to Belarus. Although one cannot help but note the fact that gas supplies are decreasing. For a fairly logical reason — we have the Belarusian Nuclear Power Plant in operation, there is no longer an urgent need for raw materials for thermal power plants. The Russian trade representative also noted the regular supply of equipment, machinery, ferrous metals and products made from them, plastics and products from them to our country. However, emphasis is placed on the fact that trade and economic relations between Russia and Belarus are a two-way street. After all, even by encouraging the export of Belarusian final products in the form of ready-made tractors, BELAZ mining dump trucks, the partner country is implicitly encouraging its own, Russian, manufacturers of individual components, assemblies, metal, plastics, and so on, which are often involved in joint production and technological chains.

There is something to strive for

For his part, Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Nazaruk shared his forecast for the export of Belarusian goods and services

to Russia this year. He recalled that the Head of State, by decree, approved clear parameters for the socio-economic development of Belarus for 2024. And as one of these parameters, an increase in exports of goods and services by 107.6 percent is indicated. For Belarusian exporters, this is the target they are now striving for.

First of all, we are talking about foreign trade in general. Yes, Russia is a key partner for Belarus; trade with it exceeds 60 percent. Therefore, trade volume with the Russian Federation will have a significant impact on this integral indicator.

Trade between the two countries does not undergo significant changes in terms of nomenclature, although the factor of the exchange rate of the Russian rouble to other base currencies is influencing. But, as Igor Nazaruk noted, their trade is also calculated in physical terms. And in fact, very good dynamics are visible — we are growing, and significantly. “I will note that with Russia this is precisely the factor that prevails. We supply our products to the Russian market, perhaps using the same nomenclature, but in units, litres, kilograms our growth is more noticeable,” emphasised the diplomat.

Of course, there is an influence of the banking factor in terms of exchange rates, but the economy and industry are working very successfully, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus is sure. And here it is not the merit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but the merit of a particular turner, mechanic, fitter, operator, foreman, engineer, which ultimately results in this impressive result.

Aleksey Fedosov



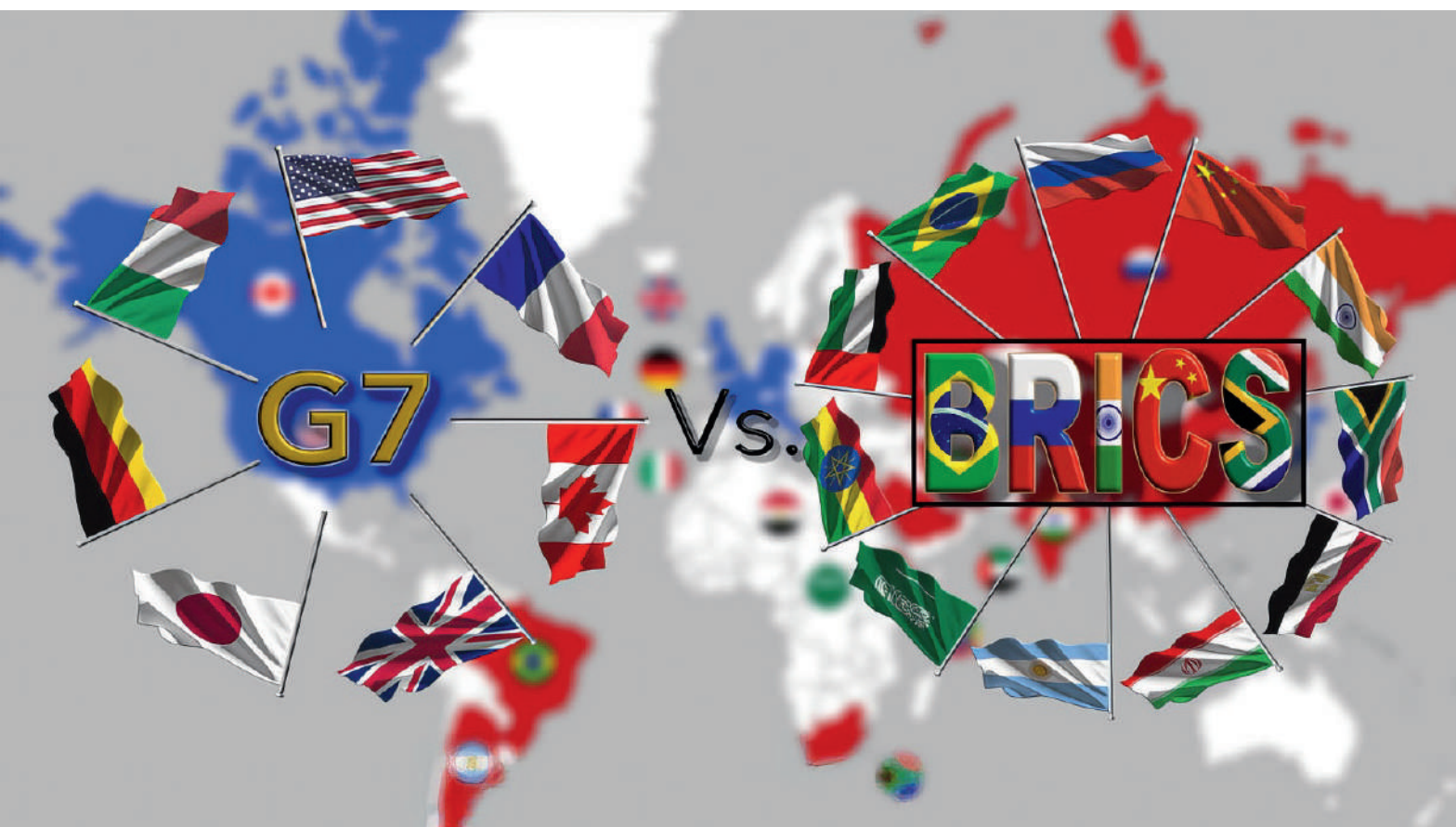
Igor **Buzovsky**,
Deputy Minister of Information of the
Republic of Belarus,
Candidate of Sociological Sciences

INTERNATIONAL CONSOLIDATION IN THE CONTEXT OF CIVILIZATIONAL CHALLENGES AND THREATS

*"Economy is the work of the spirit on the matter of
the world, on which the very existence of people
in the conditions of this world depends."*

Nikolay Berdyaev

The modern era of exacerbation of global problems and the state of the world order stimulate significant destructive processes that are characterised by society as threatening the very existence of humanity. The severity of social problems is created with a simultaneous increase in the frequency of emerging social upheavals. Society is in the stage of searching for answers to questions in the global reorganisation of the world with the need to choose new development strategies. The economy of the 20th century is a unique version of the capitalism of economically dominant countries, based exclusively on the principles of consumption. The more a society and an individual consumes, the better this affects the economy. Demand generating supply stimulates new rounds of economic development. A global market economy has emerged, characterised in large part by the pursuit of profits by private companies around the world. The world economy has expanded at least a hundred times since the beginning of the industrial age. With global output growing at an average annual rate of 3%, the global economy eventually continues to double approximately every twenty years.



Such significant indicators have practically led to the complete elimination of extreme poverty in regions where the growth of economic development is most significant. Over 50 years, modern civilization has consumed the same amount of goods and services (at constant prices) as all previous generations combined [1].

The US dollar, acting as an exchange intermediary, became a source of profit. By increasing the issue of the dollar, as well as government securities, the United States, constantly increasing consumption, also credited itself. Financial dominance in the world community allowed the United States to emerge as a superpower with enormous military might and a huge external debt of \$34 trillion, which in relation to GDP is about 120%. At the same time, income inequality and class stratification have emerged in the world community, which is rapidly growing. With global prosperity, extreme poverty persists and the gap between rich and poor widens. It is clear that this system can develop only under the condition of an ever-increasing amount of absorption of natural resources and pervasive

environmental pollution. Not noticing the obvious means becoming not just a silent contemplator, but to some extent participants in the destruction of the world community.

The crisis of the modern situation places new demands on the level of awareness of the nonlinearity and interconnectedness of processes. Radical constructive changes are possible in the case of the use of innovative ideas, the implementation of meanings that can provide new formats for both international relations and internal political processes of development of countries with broad international cooperation.

In this regard, the emergence of the SCO, CSTO and BRICS in the geopolitical space, uniting communities of like-minded states, becomes logical. The formation of a fair multipolar world order is one of the main tasks of BRICS. The mechanism for consolidating the participating countries was initially aimed at developing cooperation, strengthening security, promoting the development of all humanity and taking all possible measures to create an equal and just world.



becomes, the more obvious the issue of creating a common humanitarian space and cultural exchange arises. And ultimately, the formation of a common axiological matrix that distinguishes us from the opposing bloc of the collective West with its overwhelming liberal system of values, which was primarily adopted by today's global capitalism. The intensification of such confrontation in all vectors is obvious. This is led to by the incitement of armed conflicts in different parts of the world, continuous attempts to break established economic ties and logistics routes, etc. The reason is clear: the West cannot win in fair competition today, and is not ready for equal cooperation. Therefore, various hybrid forms of influence come to the fore — from

The driving force of interaction within BRICS is the economy. And this is CLEAR: already at the end of 2022, the total GDP of the 5 BRICS member states (China, India, Brazil, Russia and South Africa) exceeded the GDP of the countries of the so-called Group of Seven (G7 — USA, Japan, Germany, Great Britain, France, Italy and Canada). Thus, the BRICS countries provided 31.5% of world GDP, and the 'seven' — 30.1%. And this does not take into account the rich Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, powerful Iran and the largest African countries that joined BRICS this year! And by 2028, the indicators of the BRICS countries will be at 36.6%, while the G7 will be at 27.8%. In 1992, the situation was radically different: G7 produced 45.7% of world GDP, while the countries currently included in BRICS produced less than 20%. Such data were presented by Russian President V.V. Putin in his Address to the Federal Assembly, emphasising that these changes are an objective reality. "There is no escape from this. This is objective reality. So it will be. No matter what happens, including even in Ukraine." [2]

Despite the clearly positive results and prospects for interaction between the BRICS countries in economic terms, the ideological component, which should serve as the foundation and goal-setting for the strategic development of the participating countries, is extremely relevant with the definition of the development of this component as a priority task.

The faster the economic development of our countries goes, the deeper and closer economic and political interaction

direct military intervention to the imposition of one's ideological models through a wide range of information, communication, and cultural tools. They are ready to sacrifice even their fellow believers — the EU and its economy. Just to maintain the dominant position of the imperialist elites at any cost. When achieving their strategic and even tactical goals, the interests of third countries, from Ukraine to the Middle East, the interests of their peoples are not at all taken into account by the ruling circles of the 'powers of this world'.

The policy of the countries of the collective West, its hypocrisy, was very clearly highlighted during his speech at the World Summit on Climate Change in Dubai by the President of the Republic of Belarus A.G. Lukashenko. In his speech at the forum, the Head of the Belarusian State emphasised that we were talking about the future of our common home — planet Earth, "We have not had and will not have another home." Speaking about climate change and the gloomy forecasts of scientists, A.G. Lukashenko first of all drew attention to the actions of those who provoke and incite wars in different parts of the planet. According to the President of Belarus, wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Ukraine, and the Middle East cost trillions of dollars, not to mention the irretrievably lost lives. It is these funds that should be aimed at solving the problems of humanity. And the Head of Belarus touched upon another important topic in his speech: the importance of a just world as a necessary basis for solving global problems. "It's time to admit: the green

agenda is meaningless in conditions of confrontation. It requires respect for the sovereignty of countries and unconditional justice.” [3]

Will the collective West, and most importantly, the current planetary hegemon, listen to this conviction, which, by the way, is shared by the absolute majority of humanity? Unfortunately, it is difficult to hope for a positive answer to this question today. Therefore, confrontation along the lines of collective West — Russia, collective West — China, collective West — global South is a long-term trend, taking into account which we must be ready to jointly defend our positions in all directions. And here the field of confrontation is not only the security sphere and the economy as the basis, but also the creation of one's own cultural and value paradigm, which is not even a superstructure, but a necessary condition for survival in the global world confrontation.

Entering into a civilizational confrontation with a clear awareness of the relevance of the emerging universal human problems, such as overpopulation of the planet, environmental pollution, lack of natural resources, we must clearly understand that accepting the rules of the game imposed on us is a path to nowhere. The cultivation of ‘economic man’, a consumer attitude towards civilizational development and, as a consequence of this, the ‘golden billion’, childfree, eating insects and so on — up to cannibalism — is something that can be terrifying and condemned, but at the same time is part of the process and its components, possible for solving universal global problems. This process will be accompanied by an exculpatory clause, which for many is attractive and acceptable, destroying all moral barriers: ‘Nothing personal. Just business’.

This, they say, is not about a military confrontation. But what is this if not a war of minds, the ideology of life and the ideology of the future?!

To build a common axiological model for the BRICS countries, a conceptual change in approaches to goal setting is necessary, in accordance with our historical perception of the world that allows us to exist as a civilization. The dominant goal setting in social development today is that the future is a continuation of the past and is formed in the past. Our spiritual, moral, religious concepts postulate that the future is more certain than the past, the future exists to a greater extent than the past, the

present and our historical past is more unknown and incomprehensible because their true meaning is hidden, which is predetermined by the future.

It is important to understand that those who lose the concepts of the future do not know, or use completely different algorithms that explain the current state, analyse the situation in a format that does not provide clear answers to the main questions of our time that humanity poses to itself. Chaos and misunderstanding of development prospects are due to the lack of axiological models, ideology, and meanings capable of ensuring the development of society. We need to return to the origins, adequately assess and analyse the current situation from the point of view of the eternal question: what comes first — spiritual or material, being or consciousness. The concepts of happiness, comfort and more mundane categories — level, quality of life, etc. have discrepancies in their achievement and their very understanding. Not to comprehend this means to silently accept alien models and principles of development.

The dominant globalist model today assumes that it is unconditional and unambiguous. As a result, society strives to acquire and has material means for living, but at the same time it is lost in determining what and for what to live. There is no need to talk about spirituality or moral categories.

The replacement of goals with means is a characteristic feature of the process of the dominant ideology of modern life. The economic, technological, material component, of course, concerns the means, not the goals of life. The goals of human life and the means that serve to achieve them have a gap between them and may

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In geopolitical terms, the old concept of the capitalist world order and liberal strategies in reality turned into a dictatorship of one part of the world over another. This is not a reasonable scheme for life, the arrangement of society, but just an opportunity for the accumulation of wealth by a certain group of people. Behind this fundamental scheme for Western thinking is a clearly defined psychology, ideology, and philosophy of building social relations.

often be unrelated. The modern dominant ideology, in which cause gives rise to effect, is essentially abnormal, destructive for social development.

American economist W.W. Hines describes this situation as follows, "The problem of the West is that, having learned to find a solution to most of our difficulties through economic activity, using natural resources to satisfy physical needs, they have become slaves to labour for a living for centuries. Having become accustomed to solving all our problems with money, we are tired. We 'buy' friends (even wives) with lavish parties and expensive cars. We achieve political power through financial investments in the 'right' parties, in voters, even bribery... We are tired. But this is usually not noticed. Despite all the wealth of the United States, despite the environment in which the middle class exists, the bulk of people are dissatisfied with their lives. National income is growing, but the life satisfaction curve is sliding down." [4]

There is a crisis in the concept of personal success, the meaning of life, based on the priority of achieving a certain level of material wealth, financial and economic criteria. An alternative to this approach, postulated by liberal globalism, should be the idea of the primacy of the spiritual, moral principle in civilizational development. It is this concept that should be the foundation of the axiological matrix of the BRICS member countries.

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scheme for Western thinking is a clearly defined psychology, ideology, and philosophy of building social relations.

But denying the existence of ideological concepts and values that determine the way of life in the interests of the currently dominant elites does not correspond to reality. If you pay attention to the development strategy of European integration, it was initially of an ideological nature with clearly defined value guidelines. The Treaty of Lisbon, which today is actually the conceptual document of the European Union, postulates the ideology of European values, defining them as binding on all EU

members. Thus, Article 2, Values of the Union, states that "the Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail." [5]

At the present stage, according to I.T. Frolov, "the need for a new synthesis of science and humanism to form a new type of science, in which research approaches would not be separated from value-based ones, from their socio-ethical foundations, and the results of research and their directions themselves would still receive a 'human dimension'" is becoming more and more obvious. [6] V.S. Stepin emphasises that the way out of the crisis of technogenic civilization "is not in abandoning scientific and technological development, but in giving it a humanistic dimension, which, in turn, poses the problem of a new type of scientific rationality, which explicitly includes humanistic guidelines and values." [7] The increasing role of humanistic values in the implementation of information, scientific and technological processes is recognised as one of the main challenges in the development of the modern world.

Today, BRICS is a platform of a unique international dialogue format for countries representing Eurasian, Indian, Islamic, Chinese, Latin American and African civilizations. Each of them has its own unique path of historical, political and cultural development.

Within the BRICS framework, intercultural communication has been actively developed since the mid-2010s. Today it is organised on a conceptually new

approach to interaction in the field of culture. While traditionally all unions were united on a territorial or substantive basis, now there is a union of countries located in different parts of the planet with a unique culture.

Russian President V.V. Putin called for the preservation and enhancement of this unique cultural heritage, active and serious dialogue in this direction in his online speech at the BRICS summit in Johannesburg in August 2023. “Cultural and civilizational diversity is one of the supporting pillars of the new multipolar world order, which implies the creation of an integral free space for cultural exchange, art, and creativity. It is time to have a serious conversation with the BRICS partners and, by the way, with the SCO partners, as well as other countries, about the future, about preserving and enhancing the world cultural heritage,” he noted. [8]

What should this value matrix be like, and on what foundations is it built? If we are talking about an alternative to the ideology of global liberalism, global capitalism, then we should probably keep in mind the world order, state and social structure based on the principles of social justice, with a large share of the socialist component. For if we are still based on capitalism, then we must clearly understand: the centre of capitalism is there — in the West, with the hegemon. Capital will strive there, will be guided by its interests, and its control centre will be there. Everything else is subordinate territories, periphery with varying degrees of autonomy and standard of living, but in no way sovereign actors in the world process, independently controlling their own destiny.

Russian President V.V. Putin, speaking at a plenary meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club in 2021, said that the existing model of capitalism has exhausted itself. According to him, the uneven distribution of material wealth leads to worsening inequality. Within the framework of such a model, “there is no longer a way out of the tangle of increasingly intricate contradictions. Everywhere, even in the richest countries and regions, the uneven distribution of material wealth leads to growing inequality, especially inequality of opportunity both within societies and at the international level.” [9]

At the same time, it is important to understand: the cultural-value alternative should extend not only to the system of moral values, the

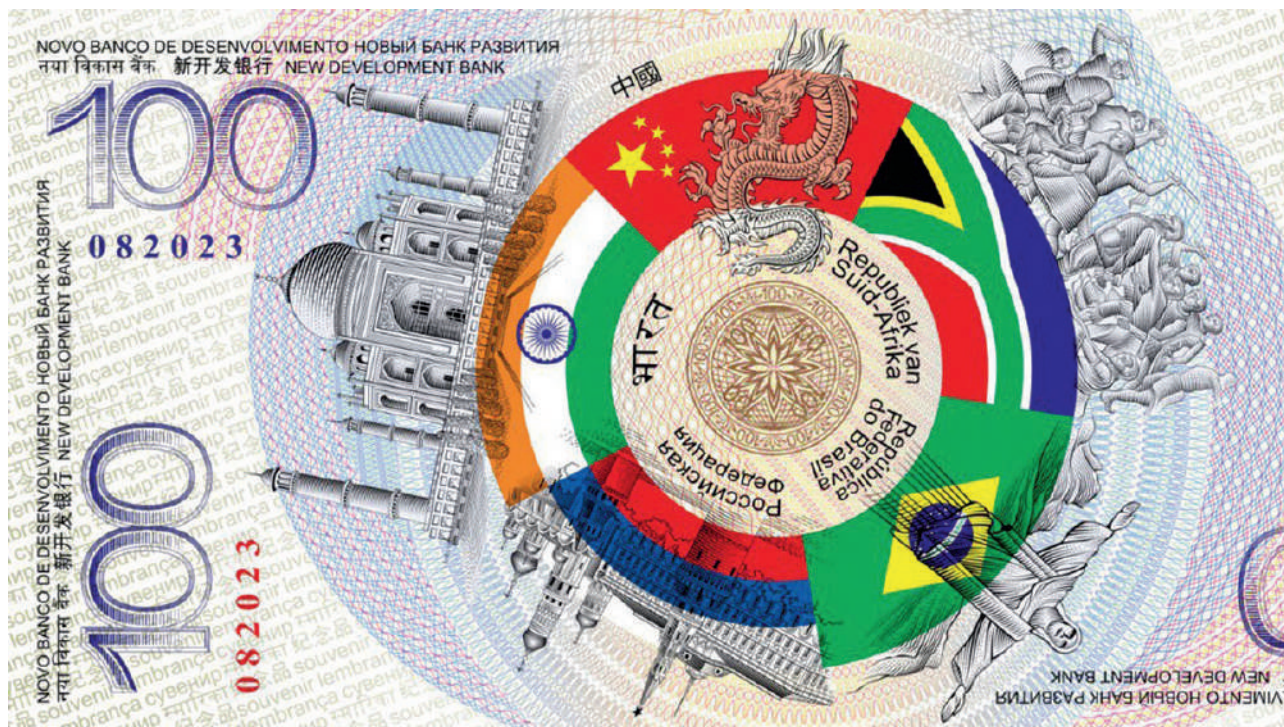
preservation of traditional cultural codes, but also to the construction of a political model that is alternative to the Western one, both in its very essence and in the tools used. So both liberalism and conservatism are Western paradigms within the global capitalist system. The same can be said about the models of political parties and major electoral systems. An alternative to these systems within the BRICS framework is represented by China with its unique political tradition, which has incorporated into its development system both elements of the socialist structure and the thousand-year-old canons of national philosophy and culture. Also included in the line of alternative development ideas are the Islamic monarchies of the Persian Gulf and Iran with their own special Islamic democracy and legal system.

It seems that other BRICS countries will also move along the path of sovereignty, turning to national traditions and experience in the very foundations of state and social construction. Such advances will be the key to strengthening our positions in the global world, since on the solid basis of our own identity and civilizational self-sufficiency it is much easier and more effective to defend our positions in global competition.

But who will carry out this work, develop and promote this value matrix, introducing it into public consciousness and the principles of public administration and interaction. Obviously, this should be done by the elites of the states that are part of the association.

Today, if we take the very definition of the elite, it has been revised since the 90s. The President of the Russian Federation directly stated this in his Address to the Federal Assembly. “You know that the word ‘elite’ has discredited itself in many ways. Those who, without any





merit to society, consider themselves some kind of caste with special rights and privileges, especially those who in previous years filled their pockets due to all the processes in the economy of the 90s, they are definitely not the elite. The true real elite are everyone who serves Russia: workers and warriors, reliable people, who have proven their devotion to Russia, worthy people.” [10]

In this activity of the elites, we believe that we note the importance of the following aspects.

First. Interaction of three social segments — government, people, elites.

In the first model of the socio-political structure of the state, the elite, together with the people, are against the authorities (this model of social relations is a harbinger of a revolutionary situation);

In the second model, the elite, together with the authorities, are against the ‘popular majority’ (elite-reformist or oligarchic model, with controversial approaches to the formation and provision of social justice. But at the same time, it has the greatest prerequisites for effective social development in the case of mandatory compliance with high moral, spiritual and moral requirements).

And in the third option, the government, together with the people, is against the elite (a fundamentalist model aimed at the concept of social justice, but with lost potential opportunities for energetic development based on the potential of the best representatives of society — the elites).

Despite the fact that none of the models provides a 100% guarantee of effective development, the second model is the most effective if the most successful, brightest, most active part of society, represented as the elite, is endowed with appropriate moral and spiritual potential. At the same time, no matter which model the country’s political system is based on, the role of elites in the development and implementation of axiological paradigms will be decisive.

Second aspect. If we set the goal of developing a common axiological model for the interstate association that is BRICS, then a common understanding of values is extremely important here — both by the elites who are the headliners of this process, and by the entire society. Simply put, it is necessary that in this sense everyone speaks the same language, and everyone has a single and clear understanding of “what is good

and what is bad”, both among the elites and among societies of the members of the association and countries collaborating with it.

A clear indication of cognitive dissonance in social processes can be the results of the work of Belarusian researchers and a direct sociological study conducted in the education system of Belarus, according to which 42% of respondents who were parents understood key value categories differently than what is transmitted to their children within the framework of educational institutions.

Thus, today the agenda includes the tasks of forming a consolidated policy in the field of cultural diplomacy, the interpenetration of cultures, developing common approaches with access to the value plane, developing common value orientations to ensure their perception by both political elites and civil society of the states of the association.

To change something for the better, it is necessary to understand the fundamental processes of world history and their philosophical meaning. Without this, efforts will be in vain, since knowledge requires serious work.

The ideological justification for global dictatorship is rooted in Western liberalism. This ideology is based on the belief in the absolute superiority of Western liberal-capitalist civilization and its all-encompassing nature. According to liberal concepts, liberal democracy and capitalism should be prescribed to the whole world, and traditional values, national sovereignty, religion, culture and ethical systems should be rejected. The Anglo-Saxon countries, which are the pioneers of this ideology, naturally claim a dominant position. Anyone who resists these ideas becomes targets of aggression. To achieve their goals, liberals use various ideologies to their advantage, including Nazism, Salafi Islamism, etc., which makes it easier to solve local problems and strengthen their positions. However, despite these strategies, our main goal is to defeat liberalism, which is a more dangerous ideological movement than any other.

In this concept, the diversity of civilizations is an objective reality. The BRICS unification as an international platform will help debunk the mythical theory of Western centrism and build a multipolar world order. It is important to establish confidence in one's own civilization, present an example of a partnership of cultures between world powers, and create a constellation of world civilizations, united on true value categories that ensure the harmonious development of the human community and ecosystem.

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Alireza Sanei

"I DON'T BELIEVE IN ALADDIN'S LAMP..."

**Exclusive interview with the Ambassador
Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of
the Islamic Republic of Iran
to the Republic of Belarus for the magazine**

Y – *Your Excellency! For us, Belarusians, Iran is an exotic, let's say, magic country which we know from books, Internet sources and as an ancient Persia. It attracts those, who like travelling and get to know culture of Middle East and Central Asia. We know well some enthusiasts from Minsk who work in this sphere. They developed quite an interesting program which includes such cities as Tehran-Qom-Kashan-Esfahan-Naeen-Meybod-Persepolis-Shiraz-Qeshm-Urmia. They also invite us to visit Iran. What steps are being taken or will be taken in order to let Belarusians discover Iran with its unique history, sea resorts on a large scale?*

– I highly recommend you to visit Iran. As a rule, Western media creates such an image of Iran which is beneficial for them only. To some extent it relates to Belarus as well. Media tries to make a blackened and negative image of our countries. The most right way to demolish this negative image is to travel and to see a country firsthand. This is what I and my family did when we came to Belarus. Mutual visits will contribute to a more adequate awareness about the culture and history of civilization. To accomplish these tasks Iran and Belarus have signed the agreement on the

launch of direct flights. I am confident when it's launched, people of our countries will travel much more and get to know each other, history and culture. I assume that abolition of tourist visa for the citizens of Belarus on a unilateral basis from February 4 will have a beneficial impact on the development of tourism. Visa abolition means that any citizen of Belarus can go to Iran with tourist purposes for two weeks and no visa is needed to be obtained. I hope the government of Belarus will also take measures to ease the procedure of visa obtainment for Iranian citizens in the Embassy of Belarus to Iran. And if it happens, the direct flight between two capitals of our states will be launched. Recently I've had a meeting with the Minister of Sports and Tourism of the Republic of Belarus, Mr Kovalchuk Sergey. Among other issues of the meeting there were launching of the direct flight, easing procedures of visa obtainment and tourism development. As I've said, I recommend you and other citizens of your country to visit Iran. There are some reasons for it. The first one is all-season climate of my country. In Iran you can observe four seasons at the same time. If it snows in the West, it's hot in the South and you can swim. The second reason is a great amount of sightseeing spots which date back up to two and a half or



three millennia. They are Persepolis, which you have already mentioned, Shiraz, Esfahan and many other unique places.

– This year Iran was the central exhibitor at the Minsk International Book Fair. Out of doubt, books of oriental authors, including in the Russian language, were in demand like in 2023. What did you propose guests this year? Share your impressions of this exhibition.

– You visited the exhibition and saw the Iranian pavilion and you can assess by yourself to what extent we were presented there this year. Iran was a central exhibitor. We presented about 350 works of Iranian authors translated into Russian. Part of the Iranian pavilion contained unique and very beautiful Iranian books. They are dedicated to Iranian miniatures, art and calligraphy. At the exhibition we had the honor to be among high officials of the Republic of Belarus, including the First Deputy of the Administration of the President, Mr Maxim Vladimirovich Ryzhenkov, and the Minister of Information, Mr Vladimir Borisovich Pertsov. I took part in the opening ceremony and had my welcome speech. In my speech, I noted that taking into account global digitalization and the fact that the younger generation reads much fewer books than before, the idea

of arranging such kind of exhibitions by the Belarusian government is of great importance. I am confident that next year Iran will take part in it at a higher level and will present books to even wider extent and on a larger scale. I am pleased to say that this year two outstanding Iranian writers participated in the exhibition, whose books were translated into Russian and were offered to the attention of guests. I think that our participation was worthy and I would like to express special gratitude to the Minister of Information of the Republic of Belarus, Mr Pertsov, for the arrangement of this exhibition. I hope that Belarus will be able to participate in such kind of exhibitions held in Iran at a high level. We try our best so that Belarusian publishing houses also take part in the book exhibition that will be held in Iran, so that they can go there and present themselves.

– Will journalists have a chance to take part in this exhibition?

– We also think about them. We keep them in mind.

– Let me ask you a couple of questions, which are not related to work. After all, you are a man and have your own needs as they don't depend on your job. In particular,

AT THE DIPLOMATIC LEVEL



■ Meeting of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Alireza Sanei with Belarusian business circles. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce Belarusian enterprises to the economic potential and opportunities of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It was attended by representatives of 170 enterprises interested in cooperation with Iran in the field of industrial production, woodworking industry, light and food industries, trade, investment, medical transport, pharmaceuticals, banking, etc.

it would be interesting to know how you adapted to our climate upon arrival to Belarus, whether it was easy for you to get used to unstable weather conditions typical for our region, what you like in our cuisine and family preferences in our food.

– Before my arrival to Belarus I've lived in Russia for about four years. My family and I were kind of ready to live in your climate. Personally for me it was easy, but for family members it was a little bit more challenging. Besides, they are far from close relatives – sisters, brothers, it was also somehow difficult due to long winters in Belarus.

As for Belarusian dishes, I can't say that I've tried many of them. So far there has been no such opportunity. But what I liked and what my wife sometimes cooks it is draniki.

Though, given we are Iranians, we prefer our own cuisine. Usually my wife cooks our dishes. We cannot bring our relatives here, but we can cook national cuisine.

– Tell us a little bit how you became a diplomat. Where did you study? Which countries did you work in? What impressed you the most when you came to Belarus?

– I studied at the University of Tehran, received a diploma in Management, then a master's degree in International Relations, and then completed postgraduate studies. As for work in the Foreign Ministry, as a rule, from time to time the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran makes announcements about new positions. Of course, you need to go through a number of interviews. If you pass them,

■ At the invitation of the Governor of the Gomel Region, Ambassador Alireza Sanei took part in the 17th Gomel Economic Forum (September, 2023)



■ During the meeting of Ambassador Alireza Sanei with the Minister of Economy of Belarus Yuri Chebotar, Alireza Sanei mentioned the agreements concluded between the two countries in the field of investment and emphasised the need for their timely implementation, and also invited Yuri Chebotar to visit Iran and take part in the 6th Export Potential Exhibition, Iran Expo 2024.



the Ministry of Foreign Affairs hires you and that what happened to me. My first mission was to Armenia, where I've stayed for six months. Then there was a permanent three-year mission in Malaysia, then I've worked in Tokyo for three years and in Moscow for four years. And now I'm in Minsk.

Due to my profession, I was able to visit many countries in Europe, Latin America, and Asia. I lived in large, heavily populated cities. Approximately 9 million people live in Tehran, 14 million in Tokyo, over 13 million in Moscow... These are noisy, heavily populated cosmopolitan cities. When I arrived in Minsk, the first thing that impressed me much was the city tranquility, which I truly enjoyed and continue to enjoy it. Minsk is a very beautiful, clean and, I repeat, calm city. And I like it. I have similar feelings when it goes to the Belarusian people, ordinary people. It seems to me that they are calm, patient and kind, living their own lives.

– *What do you think is the secret to success in the diplomat's work of your level?*

– This secret has two components. The first one is faith in your work, love for it, faith in your country and love for it, faith in the national interests of your country. The second component is related to a diplomat's character and peculiarities of his nature. These are patience, endurance, involvement in what you do, interest in solving various issues through interaction. Currently, as a diplomat, I try to keep constructive and positive interaction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus. I shall also have a positive and constructive dialogue with other Ministries, officials, organizations, and enterprises. And if a diplomat does not have such qualities as patience and endurance, then, in my opinion, he will not be able to become a good diplomat.

– *What is the most important thing in your life and what would you never ever do?*

– Faith and religious values I would put first. National interests of my country would be the second and my family would be the third. These are the most important things that keep my thoughts and feelings busy. Man, as the creation of God, is limited in his resources and capabilities. He can't do whatever comes into a head. For example, I really would like bilateral relations between Iran and Belarus to be at the highest level, but not everything depends on me. There are also a number of things that I will never do being both a human and a Muslim. Islamic values are very important to me. For example, I can't harm a human who is just like me. I can't infringe on other people's property or illegally take something in possession. Those, who do this, they act against their nature, against what is destined. I hear daily: this and that number of people were killed in Ukraine, this and that number of women and innocent children died in Gaza. However, if people live according to universal laws, there will be no murders, and actually there shouldn't be any of them. I believe that Ukrainian, Russian and Belarusian peoples are brothers. These are peoples who have common history, common culture and common values.

Due to the intervention of foreign forces, we witness what is happening now. Those who call themselves people, they betray universal principles. It is exactly the intervention of large forces that leads to wars and suffering of innocent people. The eight-year war between Iran and Iraq war was also imposed. Several hundred thousand people have died in this war. There are many examples when relatives lived in Iran and in Iraq and before the war they communicated and visited each other but the war spoiled everything.

– *In 1996, when we've walked along the Belarusian State Border for four months, we witnessed how relatives who*

AT THE DIPLOMATIC LEVEL

■ At the invitation of the State Border Committee, Ambassador Alireza Sanei visited Border Guard Institute of the Republic of Belarus State Educational Institution, where he met with its head, Major General Sergei Zhilinsky. The parties discussed and exchanged views on ways to establish connections between relevant institutions and institutions of the two countries and future cooperation.



lived near Ukraine-Belarus border visited each other on various occasions. Belarusian-Ukrainian families were created, children were born, and everyone was as happy as possible. Yet, let's hope that common sense will prevail and peace will come back.

– Mr Ambassador, your wife, Mrs Masoumeh Sanei, as far as we understand, she is also giving an interview. We'd love her to share in what way the main feasts take place in your country, in particular Nowruz, which you celebrated

on March 21, and what means “the great cleanup” thereto related as well as “the feast of the longest night”

– I told my wife that you would like to meet her. You can talk to Mrs Masoumeh after our interview. She will be happy to answer all your questions.

– Then we will continue our talk, and after that we will talk to Mrs Masoumeh. What do you like doing in your free time?

■ During a working trip to the Vitebsk Region, Ambassador Alireza Sanei met with the management of Polotsk-Steklovolokno OJSC and got acquainted with the production potential of the enterprise (November, 2023)





■ Ambassador Alireza Sanei met and talked with the Minister of Sports and Tourism of Belarus Sergei Kovalchuk. At the meeting, important issues of developing mutual cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Belarus in the field of sports and tourism were discussed.

– My residence is located on the territory of the Embassy, so I spend most of my time here. But when I have free time, I really like walking with my family, I also play sports – ping-pong, swimming, cycling. Of course, I read, watch movies and I like visiting museums and parks.

– What movie of the Iranian film studio would you advise us to watch?

– Last year, Iran took part in the Listapad film festival and presented the animated film called “In the shadow

of the Cypress.” By the way, this film won the award for the best animated film. You may watch it if you haven't seen it.

I am in touch with the Cultural Representation of Iran in Moscow. We plan to bring several good films here and arrange a week of Iranian cinema. Iran has a number of very important historical beautiful films that are accepted by all religions. For example, there is a very powerful work “The Life of Joseph.” Another film is “the Saint Mary”. It is dubbed into Russian and I would like to get it here. At



■ During his visit to Vitebsk State Medical University, Ambassador Alireza Sanei met with Iranian citizens studying at VMSU. The students talked about their life in Vitebsk and their studies at the university, shared positive emotions and reviews about Belarus and studying at VSMU.



home we watch Iranian films on Iranian channels. Film production is very developed in Iran.

– *By the way, Belarus and China signed an agreement on joint film production. It seems to us the decision to make a joint cinema is a project that will expand cooperation in the field of culture and cinema between countries. Is this area of cooperation could be possible between Iran and Belarus?*

– Unfortunately, the cinema field and the cooperation between TV channels of Iran and Belarus are among those areas in which cooperation is not developed enough. A Memorandum of Cooperation in the film industry is currently being developed, and I hope that things will move forward.

– *Do you think you are lucky in your life?*

– Usually I prefer others to say whether I am lucky enough or not, so I won't speak. But if you insist, I will just say

■ During the 31st International Book Fair in Minsk, which took place on March 14th—17th, 2024 in Minsk, Ambassador Alireza Sanei delivered remarks of welcome and gratitude for the honor be the Central exhibitor there



“Undoubtedly, the will of states, including the Republic of Belarus, to hold such exhibitions, preserve books and popularise reading, as well as honouring and encouraging writers, scientists and cultural figures testify to the state’s correct and deep understanding of the significant role of books and reading, writers, scientists and publishers, and their influence on the development and prosperity of human society...

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Minsk, understanding the importance of book reading, in order to support the efforts of Belarus to spread the culture of reading, as well as to strengthen cultural ties between the two countries, has made significant efforts to make Iran’s presence at this exhibition as bright and memorable as possible compared to previous years.”

(From the speech of the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Republic of Belarus Alireza Sanei at the opening of the 31st Minsk International Book Fair)



this: I hope I am a lucky person. At least I know I did my best for that. I've already said above that since my arrival in Belarus we have done and continue to do everything possible to ensure that relations between our countries develop. According to statistics, trade turnover between two countries increased by 40 % during this period. This is great news, but it doesn't mean it's enough. Earlier I've told about this in details. When I look back, I can say the last year was the lucky one. It goes without saying, this is teamwork. I have worked and keep on working together with my colleagues.

– ***What’s your personal receipt of success?***

– Firstly, it's trust and belief in God. As a religious person I always ask God to help. Secondly, I always want to promote national interests of my country. And thirdly, I've managed to get teamwork up and running and to achieve real results. If there was no effective interaction between us, we would have reached no success.

– ***Can you say you are a happy person?***

– I think I can. At least I feel so. I do my best for the benefit of my country, I am healthy and I am surrounded by my family and my mission in Belarus pays off and is quite successful, by virtue of all these things I can say I am a happy person.

– ***Have you ever received advice whether it was from parents, friends, children, which you applied in your life and which gave you good results?***

– We, Iranians, belong to the oriental culture and civilization. In our culture father, mother and children have a high status. Even me at my age despite that my parents passed away, I am still greatly indebted to them and thankful for their pieces of advice and recommendations. If I can say I am happy this is also because I listened to my parents' advice and followed it. Of course friends play a significant role as well whether you will be successful or not. People, who you are friends with, can say a lot about you, your position and place in the society.

AT THE DIPLOMATIC LEVEL



- Alireza Sanei: «I am pleased to say that this year two outstanding Iranian writers participated in the exhibition, whose books were translated into Russian and were offered to the attention of guests. I hope that Belarus will be able to participate in such kind of exhibitions held in Iran at a high level».

- Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the Republic of Belarus Sajjad Haider Khan greets his colleague, expressing admiration for the exposition

- *On that point Omar Khayyam has Rubai:
Of wisdom's dictates two are principal,
Surpassing all your lore traditional;
Better to fast than eat of every meat,
Better to live alone than mate with all!*
- Wise philosophy, indeed.

- *Mr Ambassador, do you speak Farsi, the language of Omar Khayyam?*
- Modern Persian language and the language of Omar

Khayyam, which belongs to the medieval Persia, differ a little. After all, many centuries have passed. If we talk about friends, I've got friends in the Foreign Ministry of Iran. Their recommendations, pieces of advice, tips also helped me to reach success.

- *How do you think what we can learn from children?*
- First thing we can learn from them is sincerity. All children are very sincere. If we are true and sincere like children, we will live in a nice world. Another feature of

children's nature is that they never hold grudges for a long time. They are in a quarrel and then in an hour you see they are already fine together as if nothing has happened. If adults had this feature, no wars or conflicts would have ever occurred. And if we could behave like children, many problems would have already been solved.

– *What's your children's attitude to your job?*

– Diplomatic work and work abroad, travelling, all these things are quite not easy for a family. It is some kind of a challenge. Life in a new country for children is good, indeed, on the one hand: new culture, impressions... However, on the other hand, children live far from their grandparents, peers and at this point it's quite hard for them. For example, my twelve-year son Sepehr, before we came here, he played basketball and took part in competitions. And of course he took a little offence at me because of my work... but then he understood this is my life, our common life. Now he plays basketball and practices taekwondo. I've also got an elder daughter Sahar, she is 28 and married. She and her husband are dentists and they live in Tehran. This January they came here to visit us. They liked Belarus. They've got the same impressions from Belarus like I've had. They liked how clean, calm it is here and how open, respectful and friendly the Belarusian people are towards foreigners.

I would like to underline that Belarusians are very kind. There is also one more thing which I can't help but saying and this is safety. Safety and security in Belarus are at very high level. The Belarusian people shall be grateful to the government and to everyone who is related to ensuring security of the country, policing measures and most particularly to the President Alexander Lukashenko that he managed to provide for such a level of security. It shall be appreciated. One of our noble people has said: there are two God's blessings, which people start appreciating only when they lose them: they are health and safety. You've got this safety. I repeat one more time: appreciate it!

– *Could you name some traits of your character which you like and what merit of yours do you consider beneficial in your life?*

– I can say that I am a person of not a bad temper. I've always been trying to be kind and friendly. I hope it feels the way I am.

– *Do you work on yourself?*

– In general, I would say one shall move on. One shall do his best to make progress. It can be done by different means, for example, by doing researches, reading books, watching movies, travelling, and learning foreign languages. All these things are ways of growth as a personality. This process never ends. At the same time a human being shall stay a human being. If he feels something violates his inner calamity and peace, he shall stop doing it.

– *If you have had the Aladdin's lamp, what would you ask from the Genie?*

– I don't believe in the Aladdin's lamp. When one avoids problems, doesn't try to find solutions, this person has nothing but hoping for a magic to happen. I am not that kind of people. If we rely on the Aladdin's lamp, no progress happens. We shall make efforts in any sphere of life. If we talk about the symbolism of this fairytale, in my perception it says about our conscious and our own efforts. And the genie, who Aladdin asks to come out of the lamp, is the symbol of our inner power, energy. In accordance with the



■ Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Republic of Belarus Alireza Sanei with his family during the celebration of Nowruz

Islamic teaching, a human being is a God's vicar on this Earth and the God has provided for the part of his skills, breathed the part of his spirit in. Human is required to be able to use them right.

– *Let me thank you, Mr Ambassador, for this comprehensive interview.*

Valentina **Zhdanovich**

Photo by the author, Ivan Zhdanovich and from open sources

NOWRUZ DURING RAMADAN



We held a conversation with Mrs Masoumeh Sanei, spouse of Mr Alireza Sanei, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Republic of Belarus, on the aspects of current adherence to Iranian cultural traditions.

– Mrs Masoumeh, let me extend my gratitude for your consent to have a meeting with us. We'd love you to share in what way the main feasts take place in your country, in particular Nowruz, which you celebrated on the Vernal equinox – on March 21, and what means “the great cleanup” thereto related as well as “the feast of the longest night”?

– It's my pleasure to tell you about the feasts we have in our country. All public holidays of the Islamic Republic of Iran can be divided into two types, which are the national holidays and the religious ones. If we talk about the national holidays, they are the feast of the longest night called Shabe Yalda and Nowruz. Shabe Yalda is celebrated on December 21. According to the Iranian calendar, it is the winter solstice day. Yalda, we may call it this way as well, is the longest night of a year. It can be also called as the night of the Sun birth. This Zoroastrian feast traces its origin back to ancient times, and initially it was related to the birth of god Mithras considered as the god of the Sun by ancient Iranians. On the eve of the 21st of December families set out small tables with specific things to be put on. This is not the table where people sit at to have their meal, but some kind of a festival little corner, where such a table stands in. This table contains fruits and nuts. Pomegranate and watermelon are considered to be symbols of the Iranian solidarity. Reading such books as “Shahnameh” by Ferdowsi and poems of Hafez is another tradition of the Iranian culture during the Yalda night. We read a fortune in the poems of Hafez, a classic of the Persian poetry. How does it take place? Everyone thinks of something important, then opens any page of a book and finds an answer to a question. The book “Shahnameh”, which means “the Book of Kings”, is also among the things of the table. This marvelous poetic epos consists of 55 thousand distichs full of scenes of eternal fight of light and darkness, love and hatred, friendship and enmity, life and death, victory and defeat.

– All people read a fortune in sequence, do they?

– As a rule, the elders read a fortune and extracts from the book “Shahnameh” for the younger ones. That's how families spend cozy evening together in Iran on the eve of the winter solstice.

– Is Nowruz also important for Iran?

– It is very important. For it is our New Year. By the way, both Nowruz and Shabe Yalda are included in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List. Besides Iran, Nowruz is celebrated in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan.

– How did you celebrate it in your family? What did you cook?

– The traditional dish which is made on this day and I also made it is rice with greens and fish. Fish symbolizes joy while greens are the symbol of life. Before the Nowruz festival there are some things which women do as a rule. This big cleanup is supposed to be something like washing and cleaning carpets, washing curtains, throw old things away. All family members put on completely new clothes and shoes. The day before Nowruz we also make a table of seven dishes and that's why it's called Haft Sin. Name of each dish starts from the Persian letter “Sin”. The number seven had been sacred in Persia from ancient times. Seven dishes mean seven angelic



■ An elegant decorative item in Iranian families is vases, emphasising the overall style of the interior.



For many centuries, the people of Iran gathered on the occasion of the longest night of the year and performed the ceremonies and customs associated with it; such as: gathering of relatives in a large family house such as grandparents, reading old Persian stories and poems of Hafez and Shahnameh, giving gifts to each other and children, eating all kinds of fruits, dry fruits, sweets and nuts, etc. On this night Iranians provide each other with the possibility of happiness in every possible way.

ABOUT TRADITIONS



■ Pomegranate and watermelon are symbols of the Yalda holiday. These are two inseparable fruits of the Yalda night ritual, a symbol of Iranian solidarity. Nuts are also another reflection of Iranian science and culture. Pomegranate is also known as the fruit of the gods and is a symbol of blessing, happiness and fertility. The pomegranate on Yalda's night table is associated with the sun and the victory of light over darkness.

harbingers of revival of life, health, happiness, prosperity, joy, patience, beauty. This is garlic (sir) – a symbol of medicine, apples (sib) – a symbol of beauty and health, wheat or lentil sprouts (sabze) – a symbol of the revival of nature, wild olive (sendjed) – a symbol of love, vinegar (serke) – a symbol of wisdom and patience, bread pudding (samanu) – a symbol of prosperity, the spice called sumac (somag) is a symbol of dawn. This small table can also contain coins, candles, hyacinth flowers. Tradition of the New Year celebrations goes deep into ancient time back to 3000 years. On the New Year day people visit their relatives and children receives gifts from the elders. The festival lasts for 13 days. Those days are the New Year vacations in Iran. The 13th day is the Nature Day. Families gather together, go outside, go to mountains, and stay by water. They throw greens into the water which they grew by themselves and wish health each other.

– *And where are you going to go here?*

– This year the holiday coincided with the holy month of Ramadan, so there will be no specific celebrations. By the way, last year it also coincided with Ramadan. But on this day in the evening after breaking the fast (iftar), we will arrange something and celebrate it with our family.



■ Unlike the New Year, there must be certain dishes on the table on Nowruz holiday. Each product of the Haft Sin holiday table is symbolic. For example, garlic is protection from evil spirits, apples are a symbol of beauty and health, vinegar is a symbol of wisdom and patience, bread and pomegranate are symbols of fertility and abundance, sprouted greens are a symbol of growth and life, etc. Some Haft Sin object also have a symbolic meaning: a mirror is a symbol of purity and sincerity, a candle is a symbol of light and radiance. The picture shows a table set by Mrs. Masoumeh for the Nowruz celebration.

– *Is the date for Nowruz different every year?*

– Yes it is. Iran doesn't use the Georgian calendar. In ancient times, astronomers headed by Omar Khayyam, based on observations of the Earth's rotation around the Sun, made mathematical calculations and made our own calendar, which we do use. This is the Solar Hijri based on high accuracy. This is a two-thousand year calendar as it proves the ancientness of our civilization, culture and authenticity of our people. According to the solar calendar in Iran Nowruz arrives when the Earth rotates around the Sun fully. It happens at different times and by accurate calculations we learn about the time of the New Year with an accuracy of up to a second. According to the solar calendar now Iran is in the year 1403. Time reckoning system begins from the onset of Islam – the moment when the prophet Mohammad moved from Mecca to Medina in 622.

– *Could Mrs Masoumeh share a secret of what the favorite dish of Mr Ambassador is?*

– Fortunately, Mr Ambassador eats everything I cook. He is not very picky when it goes to food. Though, he mostly prefers “kabab koobideh”, which is something like minced meat on the skewers. And one more dish called “ghormeh sabzi”. It is meat in the souse of greens, onion, lemon, red beans and spices. This souse is poured over the rice. I also cook lasagna and the Olivier salad as well. We use it as appetizer.

– *And draniki?*

– So is the draniki at the request of Mr Ambassador.

– *We don't have as many greens as you do in Iran. How do you manage with it?*

– We bring dried greens from Iran.

– *What kind of desserts do you cook?*

– I like cooking fruits jelly preferably made of strawberry and banana. Mr Ambassador also likes it. I cook tiramisu, cupcakes, and pastries as well.

– *Does your son Sepehr study in the Embassy school?*

– He has online study in the Iranian school. Previously, there was a separate Embassy school in Minsk, but now due to a little number of the Embassy staff, it doesn't exist.

– *Mrs Masoumeh, you hold a degree in humanities for sure, aren't you? Or maybe you are a fine art expert?*

– No. I graduated from the Tehran University and hold my master's degree “Food technology”.

– *Wow. You could have been a manager of a restaurant.*

– *(Laughing).* My profession is not related to cooking. It is a food quality control in factories which produce foods. It is also connected to food storage conditions. It is highly likely to be more of food engineering.



■ Mrs Masoumeh Sanei
at the 31st Minsk International Book Fair

– *How do you find the quality of Belarusian products?*

– The quality is good. For example, the milk. I like the fact that the expiry date of a milk package is fully complied. This is a good quality indicator.

– *Did you meet Mr Ambassador in Tehran?*

– We met in Tebriz when I studied my first year of the bachelor's degree. But I was born in Tehran.

– *Have you already travelled within Belarus?*

– Due to Mr Ambassador's busy agenda we managed to visit the Nesvizh castle, the Mir castle and Dudutki. But we still have time and I hope we will see other places. I plan to visit Brest, Vitebsk... Belarus is very beautiful. I saw your towns and villages. They are very cozy, especially in spring when everything blooms. It gives much pleasure to observe all this. With regards to your people, I can say when I talk to them it gives me a lot of positive emotions and my soul feels warmth. Cordiality and amiability are the unique qualities of Belarusians.

Valentina **Zhdanovich**

Photo by the author and archive of Ms. Masoumeh Sanei



FROM DELICACY AND 'DEVIL'S APPLE' TO SECOND BREAD



How
potatoes
conquered
the world

A At one time, potatoes saved people from famine and strengthened empires. Today in some countries, including Belarus, potatoes are a cult product. It is called the second bread. Many people eat dishes made from it almost every day. It is prepared in all possible ways: boiled, steamed, fried, mixed with other products. At the same time, people often remember only the benefits, believing that the root vegetable is capable of saturating the body well and helping to obtain the required dose of vitamins. However, there are also health risks from excess potatoes.

We talked about the benefits and harms of potatoes with the neurosurgeon, researcher at the Department of Brain Tumours of the Republican Scientific Practical Centre of Oncology and Medical Radiology named after N. N. Aleksandrov, professor 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.

“Some researchers divide empires into wheat and potato empires. Where did this come from?”

“The historian, author of the book *The Rise of the West*, William McNeill, said, “If there were no potatoes, Europe would not be able to achieve the success that it has now.” And it’s hard to disagree with this.

Famine during the Middle Ages in Europe was considered a common thing, and many people died for this reason. Everything depended on whether the year was a good one or a bad one, whether it was raining or whether there was a drought, whether the plants were sick and whether pests destroyed them. There was little land for growing wheat, as it is a rather capricious crop. Thus, the harvest depended on many factors.

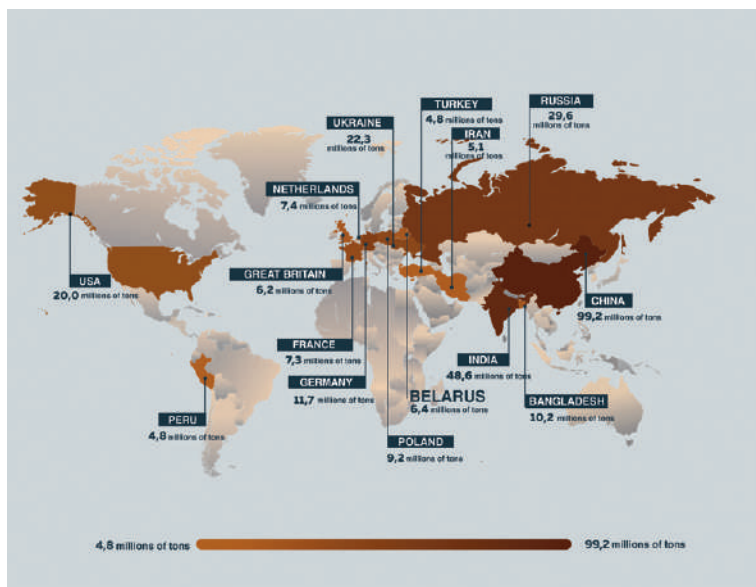
If a person does not have enough calories, from morning to evening he only thinks about what to eat so as not to die of hunger. And not about opening or expanding the territory. Lack of food greatly affects the train of thought.

The only place where the problem of hunger was not so pressing was the area around the Mediterranean Sea: there is a lot of seafood in the water, and you can harvest plant foods, including growing wheat. These territories developed. Therefore, the Roman Empire, Egypt and Persia were called ‘wheat empires’, their power lay in the fact that they could grow grain and develop.

By the way, in territories with an abundance of protein food, people were more aggressive and more rapidly developed their empires. This applies, for example, to the Vikings. They had easy access to the sea, which meant plenty of fish, a source of protein, and they were considered strong warriors. In India and China, rice was predominantly consumed as the soil and weather were conducive to its cultivation. But again, famine was known there too: either a lack of water or plant diseases periodically became the causes of crop failure. And since the population concentration was quite large, the famine years brought a large number of victims here too.

The situation was radically changed by Columbus's discovery of America in 1492. The Spaniards were amazed that the local inhabitants, the Indians, despite the fact that they were not very developed, were very advanced in plant growing. There, for the first time, Americans saw beans, cocoa beans, sweet peppers, tomatoes, pumpkins, squashes and, most importantly, corn and potatoes.

The Indians used a mixed form of cultivation. They planted corn, and between it, where there was shade, they grew beans, because beans do not like the sun, and besides, the beans did not allow weeds to grow. Zucchini and pumpkins were also grown there. At the same time, they harvested corn, beans, squash and pumpkins and therefore made the most of the soil.



The Spaniards quickly realised that potatoes, unlike wheat, are not too dependent on weather conditions, since they grow underground. Over the course of thousands of years, Indians have bred more resistant potatoes from wild varieties. Despite the fact that the birthplace of the root crop is the Andes, the mountainous regions of Bolivia and Peru, potatoes in what was then America grew everywhere from north to south, but differed in shape and color. So is corn. Europeans realised that these were crops that could be grown in different latitudes with different climates.

Spanish conquistadors brought potatoes to Europe from South America in 1570. It was first mistaken for an ornamental plant, and a poisonous one at that. But over time it became clear that this was a salvation from

hunger. After all, potatoes grown on an area the size of a football field yield 7.5 million calories, while wheat on the same area only produces 3.8 million, almost half as much. Therefore, the German, English, French and Russian empires are called potato empires.

The first appearance of potatoes in Russia dates back to the end of the 17th century and is associated with the name of Peter the Great. At first, potatoes were considered an exotic plant and were served only in aristocratic houses. Due to many poisonings caused by eating fruits and young tubers containing solanine, peasants initially did not accept the new crop. There are even known potato riots in the Russian Empire – mass protests of peasants associated with forced cultivation of potatoes and ignorance of the rules for their storage and use, which caused poisoning. But gradually potatoes gained recognition, displacing turnips from the peasant diet. Nevertheless, back in the 19th century, many peasants called potatoes ‘devil’s apple’ and considered eating them a sin.

On the territory of modern Belarus, and then the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, potatoes appeared in 1676, when they were brought from Europe. However, potato planting was then limited; its fruits were considered a delicacy and were served only in rich houses in Warsaw and Vilnius. In the 18th century, potatoes began to be grown and consumed almost throughout Belarus. After joining the Russian Empire, potatoes continued to be grown on the lands of modern Belarus. This was facilitated by the lands themselves, especially peat bogs. Historians believe that Russia expanded its possessions thanks to potatoes. Despite the fact that in India and China the main food was rice, when potatoes arrived there, they helped to reduce the hunger. And today these countries, together with Russia, are the world leaders in potato growing.”

“What are its benefits?”

“Naturally, this is not a superfood. However, potatoes contain large amounts of certain minerals, particularly potassium. This mineral contributes to the fight against hypertension by promoting vasodilation. Potassium also has a diuretic property and is necessary for people suffering from gout, acidosis, cystitis and prostatitis. Iron, phosphorus, calcium, magnesium and zinc contained in potatoes help grow and strengthen bones. Potatoes also contain vitamins of groups C and B. Proteins, which are also found in potatoes, provide the body with fourteen of the twenty essential amino acids. Thus, thanks to potatoes, you can provide yourself with a certain amount of minerals and vitamins. If a person does not have obesity, diabetes, or skin problems, you can safely consume it once or twice a week.”

“However, Belarusians eat potatoes much more often. It is harmful?”

“There is little benefit from this. Potatoes can be eaten every day if they do not form the basis of the diet. For example, if it serves as one of the components of soup. Given its high glycemic index (a value that determines the sugar-lowering properties of a product), it is considered sufficient to eat potatoes every day for a week to gain a kilogram of weight. The glycemic index is measured on a scale of 0 to 100, and anything over 70 is considered high. So, for potatoes, no matter what form you eat them in, it is 70 and higher, and the highest is for fried ones.

At the same time, there are simple techniques to reduce the glycemic index of potatoes. If, after cooking, it is cooled and kept in the refrigerator, the starch turns into resistant starch. It passes through the stomach and is slowly absorbed in the intestines, providing a good source of nutrition for the local microflora. And it is known to perform many functions: it affects the immune system, the brain, metabolism, insulin sensitivity, bad cholesterol levels, reduces the likelihood of cancer and much more. There are 4 grams of resistant starch per 100 grams of chilled potatoes (for every thousand calories we need 15 grams of fiber or resistant starch). This technique, by the way, can be used for rice and pasta.

The fact that starch has become resistant is indicated by changes in potatoes. It becomes less tasty and not so crumbly, but more dense, even a little like rubber. But it's healthier this way. By the way, for the same reason, crumbly varieties of potatoes are more harmful than dense ones – they contain more starch, and it is easier to digest.”

“For this reason, is it OK to reheat potatoes?”

“Resistant starch remains, but its amount decreases slightly. While there are 4 grams of resistant starch per 100 grams of chilled potatoes, then for reheated potatoes this value is about 3.5 grams.”

Thus, potato starch is also good. One tablespoon contains 7 to 9 grams of resistant starch. If you add two tablespoons to salad or yogurt during the day, this will be of great benefit for the intestinal flora. Resistant starch is not immediately digested in the intestines, unlike, for example, peas or lentils, and does not cause increased gas formation.”

“You shouldn't cook greenish tubers. Why?”

“Potatoes contain poison – solanine and other glycoalkaloids, but in small quantities that are safe for us. But if stored improperly, root vegetables become greenish in color. Solanine accumulates under the skin. Therefore, it is better to throw away the green potatoes. It is believed that half a kilogram of green potatoes is enough for solanine poisoning.



Solanine is generally contraindicated for children, as it primarily affects the nervous system. Some scientists believe that large accumulations of solanine cause a decrease in intelligence in children.

Solanine is not water-soluble and is poorly excreted through the kidneys, but accumulates in the body, in particular in the joints. And it can cause, in addition to neurological diseases, joint diseases. Considering that Belarus has humid weather, little sun, and therefore not the most favorable climate for the musculoskeletal system, excess solanine is harmful for joints.

Solanine in potatoes is destroyed at 170 degrees. At the same time, at a higher temperature, other toxic substances begin to form, so it is not advisable to remove it in this way.

Green tomatoes, by the way, also contain solanine. When they are ripe, its amount decreases to a safe minimum.”

“Which form of potatoes is the healthiest?”

“Jacket potatoes. And the most harmful is fried. However, no matter how useful this or that product is, a healthy diet implies a varied diet, because this is how we get useful substances from different sources. And the more varied the diet, the better.”

Yelena Kravets

CREATORS AND CREATIONS

The new book series reflects the achievements of modern Belarusian literature over the past decades

In the past, in 2023, the Aversev Minsk publishing house started the implementation of the project to publish a series of books Modern Belarusian Literature. The authors of the idea — the Director and Editor-in-Chief of the publishing house Dmitry Dembovsky and Aleksandr Taranda turned to the Writers' Union of Belarus for support in forming the thematic space of the series. The chairman of the writer's organisation, Ales Karlyukevich, agreed to act as contributor to each of the books under the same Modern Belarusian Literature brand. Nine books of the series have already been published: Forgiveness, Your Soul is Bright, Magic Treasury, Conversation with the Mirror, Shadows of the Wild Hunt, Instructions for Seducing Married Women, Footprints of Giants, The Needle in the Square, Planet as a Gift. In fact, a complete library was formed that reflects the literary process in our country.

“Both readers and writers quite often ask themselves the question, what is the basis of the principles of the formation of the content of the books in the series,” says the Chairman of the Writers' Union of Belarus, Ales Karlyukevich. “The answer is quite simple. It consists of two parts. The first part of the answer is that the collections include everything that can be considered the best of the achievements of the last two or three decades. And the second part of the answer is that the best is selected from the pages of well-known literary and artistic periodicals: the magazines Polymya, Malodost, Nyoman, the newspaper Litaratura i Mastatstva. So, for example, the first book Forgiveness was created, which includes the stories of Alena Brava, Ales Badak, Oleg Zhdan, Andrei Fedorenko, Anatoly Benzeruk. And while Alena Brava's work Forgiveness was written about twenty

years ago, Loners by Ales Badak is a recent work... In the formation of collections, we are guided by multi-faceted approaches; we include them according to genre branching and based on thematic dimensions. Books of short stories and women's novellas were followed by collections of fiction, natural science stories, and fairy tales for children. First, we included editions where within one volume there were texts written in Russian and Belarusian, depending on the language in which the original was written. As in the collection Magic Treasury, where the children's fairy tales of Lyudmila Rubleuskaya and Katsiaryna Khadasevich-Lisava are presented in Belarusian, and an excerpt from the story of Gennady Avlasenko — in Russian. Later, they came to the conclusion that it is better to publish the Belarusian volume and the Russian volume separately... Thus, in the book The Needle in the Square they included stories written in Russian by Sergei Trakhimenok, Oleg Zhdan, Vera Zelyanko, Anatoly Matvienka, Valiantsina Drabysheuskaya, and Ales Kazhadub.”

The reader was particularly interested in the following books of the series: Conversation with the Mirror, which is a collection of women's novellas, and Shadows of the Wild Hunt, which combines mythology and history. From the abstract to Conversations with the Mirror: ‘Belarusian women writers are searching, they are putting on the surface (more often they do it quite openly) inner pain, which a man will not immediately notice or find in life. No matter what they write about: war or Chernobyl, love or family values, the connection of generations, women remain women and strive to rise above the whole world, try to see what their strength is worth... Works of

Yasenia Aliakseyeva, Alena Brava, Sviatlana Biazlepkina, Tatsiana Dashkevich, Tatsiana Dzemidovich, Valiantsina Drabysheuskaya, Vera Zelyanko, Nasta Nareika, Nina Rybik, Alena Stelmakh, whom you will meet in this publication, are a wide palette of women's view of time and everyday reality. As it seems to me, it is hardly possible now to look at these works condescendingly and from the height of male victories in domestic prose. Of course, they do not have absolutely everything that characterises the search for women in today's Belarusian prose. But this book is proof that the search is quite fruitful. It seems that on the shoulders of women creators lies a greater responsibility for the moral aspirations of a person — both the woman herself and the man... The senior author of the collection is Vera Zelyanko, who was born in 1956. And the youngest is Yasenia Aliakseyeva, who is only twenty-two years old... The book *Shadows of the Wild Hunt* contains the works of Ales Kazhadub Lesavik, Lyudmila Rubleuskaya's *Nights at Plebantsy Mills* and Hanna Navaseltsava's *The Myth of Love*. History and mythology came together. The book unites characters who are in the age-old search for the human essence, contact between man and nature.

...The project Modern Belarusian Literature turned out to be a sought-after by Belarusian readers. The books leave the shelves of bookstores quite quickly, and most of the country's libraries also purchase them. A conference on the book of stories *Forgiveness* was held in the Brest Regional Library named after Maksim Gorky. The entire series was presented at the Yakub Kolas State Literary and Memorial Museum. Each of the books of the project Modern Belarusian Literature is written about by the domestic media: the newspapers *Litaratura i Mastatstva*, *Zvyazda*, the magazines *Byarozka*, *Polymya*, *Rodnaye Slova*, *Maladost*, *Alesya*...

"Following the books that have already seen the light of day," says Ales Karlyukevich, "new collections of domestic prose will come to the reader. One of the upcoming publications will be dedicated to the literature of young authors. To a large extent, its content will be made up of the works of the winners of Pershatsvet Republican Literary Contest, which is founded by the Ministry of Information of the Republic of Belarus, the Writers' Union of Belarus, the *Zvyazda* publishing house, and the *Mastatskaya Litaratura* publishing house."

Kastus Leshnitsa





АЧЫШЧАЕЦА
СЭРЦА МАЁ
ІДУЧЫ ПА
ЧЫСТАЙ РАЦЭ

THE RICH PALETTE OF CHINESE HISTORY

More than 80 works from the collection of decorative and applied arts of the East of the National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus — wooden, porcelain and bronze sculpture, costume elements, Chinese folk pictures, calligraphy and woodcuts — were presented at the exhibition in Minsk, the epigraph of which was the lines of ancient Chinese poet Li Bo 'Walking along a clean river cleanses my heart...'





Interesting and educational

It must be said that in fact this is an exhibition about Chinese art. The poet's lines, as well as the exhibition presented in the main museum of the country, turned us to deep questions: what is the culture of the people and what is its purpose? However, many art historians believed that the exhibition reflected nothing more than the diversity of life in traditional China and conveyed the essence of the worldview characteristic of the Chinese. The time range of the objects displayed at the exhibition is from the 17th century to the present day. Visitors were able to see many of the exhibits for the first time, including works by Chinese masters, which were donated to the National Art Museum of Belarus in 2023 by the Dunou China Eastern Europe Culture and Education Exchange Centre.

Thematically, the exhibition space *Walking Along a Clean River Cleanses My Heart...* was divided into three blocks. The first is images that correspond to the popular consciousness (beliefs in spirits, symbols and signs of folk celebrations). The second is religious and philosophical images (Confucian and Buddhist). And the third are images directly related to the Shi class — bureaucracy (calligraphy, signs of officials, costumes). Of course, this exhibition is very, very educational. From it, for example, you will learn a lot of interesting things about Chinese writing and calligraphy. By the





became more than just a practical embodiment of Chinese writing or a tool for transmitting information. This, perhaps more importantly, is a unique means of expressing the spiritual world of a calligraphy master. In other words, calligraphy serves as a means of conveying emotions, aesthetic views, moral qualities and character of the author. Those who are well versed and appreciative of the art of calligraphy can even tell you about the character, temperament and even changes in the social life of a calligrapher just by looking at his work.

The main material elements of the art of calligraphy are the ink stick, ink stone, writing brush and paper. All of them are combined into one concept, which is known as the 'Four Treasures of the Cabinet'. These four writing instruments have been used by artists in various periods of Chinese history — from ancient times and, in fact, to the present day. By the way, ancient Chinese seals are a stylised image of the artist's name, skilfully engraved on a wooden surface. It was customary for artists to use both seals and a signature to leave their name on an oil painting, a piece of calligraphy, a text with a poem or story, documents and letters.

Of course, with regard to the technological features of calligraphy, tools are very important for it. The brush, for example, should be round and pointed at the end, and also hold a sufficient amount of ink well. Ink should be uniform and with a glossy sheen. The paper on which you will write hieroglyphs should be such that the ink

way, Chinese calligraphy is an ancient oriental art that dates back more than two thousand years. Although it is not known for certain when hierographic writing arose. Yes, calligraphy is not only an art that reflects the artist's inner world, but also a convenient way of writing hieroglyphs. Today, there are several styles of Chinese calligraphy, each of which has certain properties and purposes. For example, the style of 'xingshu', or running script, is quite convenient, since with its help you can achieve high speed in writing hieroglyphs. But the 'kaishu' style is one of the latest and most legible, so learning calligraphy very often begins with it.

A pedigree with deep roots

Chinese writing is among the oldest writing systems in the world. Moreover, this system has not only been used continuously for thousands of years, but, remarkably, remains in effect today. Undoubtedly, the history of Chinese characters goes back to ancient times. Over the centuries, Chinese writing has evolved into a highly revered art form, known throughout the world as Chinese calligraphy.

Without exaggeration, calligraphy is considered one of the treasures of Chinese culture. Its execution





does not bleed over it. Calligraphy also widely uses an ink stone, or ink pot, which is used to mix ink with water.

Features of a creative approach

In fact, calligraphy has always been considered the most important art in China. In ancient times, hierarchical lists of 'important arts' were created, and in them it was consistently in first place. Another fact: calligraphy in China was born before painting. After all, initially writing hieroglyphs was a magical technique that was mastered only by the shaman priests of the ancient kingdom of Shang-Yin (3rd millennium BC). In those days, they knew how to make rain by writing the appropriate hieroglyph. The hieroglyphs of those times really resemble magical signs; they are not at all similar to modern Chinese writing.

A little later, hieroglyphs began to perform the function of writing, which was owned only by rulers, nobles and the first officials of the ancient kingdoms, which were constantly fighting with each other. Knowledge of hieroglyphs and the ability to write them began to indicate that a person belonged to the ruling elite. An

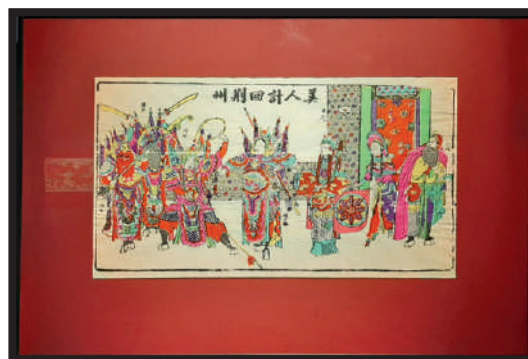
important event in the history of Chinese calligraphy was the rise to power of Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor of China, who united all of China into one empire. But the empire required a large bureaucratic apparatus and calligraphy became the work of officials. At the same time, the first reform to standardise and unify Chinese characters was carried out. In general, Chinese civilization reached the climax of its greatness during the Tang and Song dynasties (8th — 12th centuries). At that time, Chinese art rose to incredible heights.

The era of the Tang and Song dynasties is associated with such a phenomenon in Chinese culture as 'Neo-Confucianism' — a philosophical movement that tried to bring different parts of Chinese culture under a common denominator. It is then that painting, calligraphy, poetry and the art of creating seals were united into a single whole. There have been attempts to combine larger parts of Chinese culture, such as Confucianism and Buddhism.

Neo-Confucianism also created the image of the Chinese gentleman, a man who can do anything. The entire Chinese elite, not excluding the emperor, sought



to live up to this image. The conditions for compliance also included proficiency in painting, calligraphy and poetry. By combining painting and calligraphy together, the masters of the Tang and Song era significantly enriched both types of art. For example, calligraphers sought to introduce the concept of calligraphic technique into previously academic painting and began to paint pictures only with shades of ink. They created objects in their drawings using quick brush movements. And the technique of drawing a bamboo trunk was constructed by analogy with the technique of writing basic calligraphic features: vertical and horizontal. At the same time, many began to perceive calligraphy as creativity. It was then that the golden age of Chinese cursive and semi-cursive writing began. These two styles allowed the calligrapher to express his individuality through the original style of writing hieroglyphs. Each author had his own cursive and semi-cursive writing, and often hardly resembled the original hieroglyph, so the author of the cursive inscription often had to sign an explanation on the back of the work. Especially if we are talking about 'wild' cursive writing, where an entire column of hieroglyphs could be written in one movement, in one line.





Over the next millennium, no major changes or innovations occurred in Chinese calligraphy. Changes came with the 20th century and the era of revolutions. It was the revolution that brought the reform of Chinese writing during the time of Mao Zedong, which simplified many characters. The Chinese language reform carried out in the middle of the last century was extremely profound. The Chinese abandoned the traditional way of writing books from top to bottom, from right to left, and switched to lowercase writing from left to right using European punctuation. It was the kaishu style, reformed in the 20th century, that became the basis for modern printed Chinese characters. However, the ability to write hieroglyphs beautifully with a brush and ink is still extremely highly valued in China.

For a better understanding of what you see

So, calligraphy in China refers to the art of writing hieroglyphs with a brush or the science of the rules and techniques of this art. It is popular in China and several neighbouring countries, which were greatly influenced by Chinese culture in ancient times. In China, calligraphy

is considered an art equivalent to painting. Nowadays, great importance is attached to holding exhibitions of the works of ancient and modern calligraphers, organising competitions between amateurs and professionals.

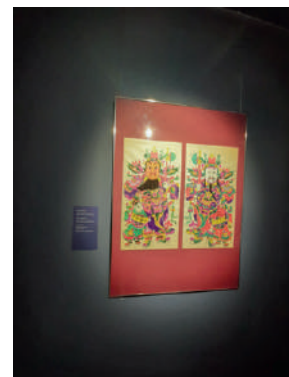
To learn how to write beautiful hieroglyphs, you need long and persistent practice. This has been confirmed by many great calligraphers. For example, Wang Xizhi, who had a huge influence on the development of calligraphy and was revered by his contemporaries and descendants, as a child dirtied all the water in the pond in front of his house, washing the accessories after each lesson. Another master, the monk Zhiyong, who lived during the Sui dynasty, was so diligent in his teaching that he filled many jugs with old brushes, which he later buried in the 'tomb of brushes'.

Nowadays, calligraphy has become popular again among Chinese students, many of whom demonstrate real skill. With the invention of photocopying and modern printing technology, it became possible to make photocopies of the works of the great Chinese calligraphy masters. But such copies, of course, cannot be compared with handwritten calligraphy.



Reflection of spiritual culture

And now a few words about woodcuts, which were also presented at this exhibition. So, woodcut is a printing technique using a wooden board, on the surface of which text or a mirror image is cut out. Woodcut printing first appeared in China. Although the exact time of its invention is also unknown. The oldest surviving examples of woodcut texts date back to the turn of the 7th and 8th centuries.



The woodcut technique was constantly improved. In 1341, the earliest surviving book with two-colour text, The Diamond Sutra with commentary, was printed. The sutra text is printed in red and the commentary text is printed in black. The first attempts to convey colour in printed matter date back to a much earlier period than the mid-14th century. The earliest examples are printed black and white images, hand-coloured. Later ones are prints from one board, different parts of which were simultaneously covered with paints of different colours. In Old China, starting from the 12th century, there was a custom on New Year's Eve to decorate homes with colourful pictures, which at the end of the 19th century were called 'nianhua' — New Year's picture. The origins of the art of New Year's pictures go back to religious



leaflets, in which images of deities were accompanied by the text of a prayer. They were made using the woodcut technique (that is, the text and image were first cut out on a board and then printed on paper), which made it possible to produce them in large quantities. Chinese craftsmen were fluent in wood carving techniques and created complex works.

The northern and southern centres for the production of printed pictures for home decoration during the New Year appeared in China at the beginning of the 17th century. Even then, the woodcut technique was used to print the outlines of images, followed by hand-colouring of individual elements, as well as colour printing for details of clothing and ornaments.

In the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the New Year picture — nianhua — was already a mass art, playing an important role in the life of Old China. In nianhua, in a unique refraction inherent in this type of art, the entire complex of spiritual culture of Old China was reflected. As experts note, the plots of Chinese folk pictures are very difficult to understand not only by Europeans, but also by modern Chinese. Despite the completeness of the form, the complexity and, at the same time, clarity of the composition, the amazing harmony of bright colours, folk painting was considered 'rough' painting. Educated Chinese, who had mastered

the achievements of an ancient refined culture, did not perceive this type of folk art as a serious art worthy of attention.

Still, it is believed that the ancient art of woodcuts originated in China in the 6th century AD and was used primarily to create religious texts and images. Over time, this art spread to Japan and Korea, where it took on its own unique forms and styles. In Japan, for example, woodcuts have become the main method for creating traditional Japanese prints. In the 13th century, woodcut printing came to Europe, where at first it was used mainly to create religious icons and illustrations of biblical texts. Later, with the development of printing, woodcuts became the main way of creating illustrations for books.

P.S. In the last century, the art of China has undergone a major transformation, caused by both socio-political changes and the mutual influence of different cultures and traditions. It is important to note that lectures and master classes were held on this topic within the framework of the exhibition in Minsk with the support of the Confucius Republican Institute of Chinese Studies of the Belarusian State University. Naturally, they also touched upon the peculiarities of Chinese woodcuts.

Vsevolod Yevseyev

MISTRESS OF THE BEAUTIFUL HOUSE

How does the Bolshoi Theatre of Belarus live? What premieres will take place in the new season? We talked to the first person of the theatre, Yekaterina Dulova, General Director, Doctor of Art History, professor, about its holidays and everyday life, creative projects and achievements, about problems and ways to solve them, as well as about other moments of the eventful life of a huge creative team.



As you know, in ancient Greece, spectators at performances were given free nuts, dried fruits, and they were even treated to wine. This tradition has been transformed in theatres in our time: the audience rests in buffets during intermission. The Bolshoi Theatre buffet, as regulars know, always has a theatrical atmosphere. And even if you are not hungry after a working day, the aroma of tea and fluffy Pavlova cake will attract you. Of course, this is not the luxury of a buffet that can be seen in the buffet of the Vienna Opera, but still... Over a cup of tea at the Belarusian Bolshoi, it is pleasant to exchange opinions about this or that performance, which you came to with a companion. And in this 'buffet' connection, I cannot ignore the moment of tea parties, which traditionally take place in the cosy Round Hall of the Bolshoi during meetings of journalists with General Director Yekaterina Dulova, as well as artists and guests of the theatre on various occasions. They take place in a warm and friendly atmosphere, always with tea, coffee, cookies and sweets! We, journalists and representatives of various media outlets, accept this format of communication with great gratitude, appreciating the respect towards us and our profession. Moreover, as a sign of welcome, we are also given souvenirs. I admit, it's nice! After all, it is from the heart! It was the same this time.

The conversation with us, with the so-called journalistic focus group, started with a question from Tatiana Aleksandrova, Head of the Marketing Communications Service.

Tatiana Aleksandrova: We would like to hear what you, dear friends, remember over the past year, what would you like to speak about? And what was the most vivid thing that you remember??

Representative of the media: Here, before the conversation began, we just remembered the Bolshoi's permanent projects — these are *Ballet Summer at the Bolshoi* and *Evenings at the Radziwill Castle*, as well as summer tours. During that period, we got acquainted with the performances, which, for example, was impossible to get into in Moscow. And then they came to us themselves. It was wonderful!

Representative of the media: I support my colleague. But on my own behalf I will say: every time in the Bolshoi is always a great joy! As a rule, positive emotions! The impact is not on logic, but on our sensual nature, on intuition. In this regard, I remember the week dedicated to the creative anniversary of Valentin Elizariyev, Artistic Director of the Bolshoi Theatre, during which we watched his updated performances. A sign of great respect for the public is the Master's entrance during intermission. It was an unforgettable sight: to see a huge line of fans of his work lined up



for an autograph. And Valentin Nikolayevich himself signed booklets for spectators in the foyer at a small table, while still managing to raise his eyes and give a smile to his fans. The premiere of Igor Kolb's play *Illusions of Love* remains unforgettable. It impressed me with its powerful impact on our sensory sphere; the performance awakened your personal associations with the events of your life, with your acquaintances and friends...-

Yekaterina Dulova: even the first four showings of *Illusions of Love* were completely sold out. In fact, the performance paid off. And this suggests that the public accepted the production. Yes, this is an experiment, but we did it intentionally. And we didn't regret it. We received no negative reviews in the press at all. Yes, you can find different opinions about ballet on social media, but that's good. Theatre should be like this, attracting the audience's attention. (In Gomel, where the play went on tour in March, the audience received the production positively).

Representative of the media: The premiere is very bright. And there are a lot of good reviews and words of gratitude to Kolb on social media. And the fact that the play is still being discussed indicates that there is interest in it.

Representative of the media: Is there a new work of Kolb planned?

Yekaterina Dulova: Yes, there are two of his productions this year. This is a joint work with Anna Motornaya — *The Emotional Diary of Memory* with the ballet block by Kolb, as well as the opera *Eugene Onegin*, where all the ballet scenes will be completely recreated. Plans

for 2025 include the ballet *Bright Stream* to the music of Dmitry Shostakovich. Of course, I can't speak about this with 100% certainty, because life can make its own adjustments.

Representative of the media: Anna Motornaya had a creatively busy year. In December, she presented the premiere of Pyotr Tchaikovsky's opera *Iolanta*. Please tell us more about *The Emotional Diary of Memory*.

Yekaterina Dulova: We have already seen that Anna Motornaya prepares absolutely magnificent concerts, one might say that she creates a certain phenomenon, her projects are very meaningful. She delicately works with pop music, jazz music, and video content. With screens, which, for example, I don't really like as a theatrical phenomenon, it's still a cinematic technique. But life moves forward, young people want this kind of technology. And we take this into account. What Anna Dmitriyevna shows are simply independent art objects. As an example, a brilliant concert prepared for foreign observers on the eve of the Single Voting Day (On that day, February 25th, 2024, deputies of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of the eighth convocation and local Councils of Deputies of the twenty-ninth convocation were elected). One main task was accomplished, which was to introduce people to our country. And we managed to do this. We showed all types of arts, bringing them together.

Anna Dmitriyevna has already introduced us to the conventionally symbolic plot of *The Emotional Diary of Memory*, where the history of our country will be shown through the most difficult events for the republic. It seems to me that here Anna Motornaya immerses us in some other project that exceeds the boundaries of our academic scene. The premiere will take place on June 22nd-23rd. Well, let's see! I hope that *Eugene Onegin*, an absolute classic about which I have already spoken, will delight and surprise the audience.

Representative of the media: It is amazing that with a great hunger for good directors, the Bolshoi Theatre raised such a powerful figure as Anna Motornaya. We know that she worked a lot with the Musical Theatre, but what Anna Dmitriyevna is doing now is amazing.

Yekaterina Dulova: Believe me, we are well aware of this.

Tatiana Aleksandrova: In the near future, we will begin to gradually introduce our colleagues, if Anna Motornaya allows, to her new project.

Yekaterina Dulova: Since childhood, together with my parents, I have attended Musical Wednesdays, which were prepared by the Union of Composers and where

new works were presented. Unfortunately, this trend has gone away. Willingly or unwittingly, I listened as my father presented string and chamber music with a quartet, and my mother commented. I was immersed in this atmosphere. (Yekaterina Dulova's parents, Taisiya Alekseevna and Nikolai Semenovich Shcherbakov, taught at the Academy of Music for a long time, until 1992 it was the Belarusian State Conservatory named after A.V. Lunacharsky. Taisiya Alekseyevna, Doctor of Art History, professor, headed the Department of History of Music. Nikolai Semenovich, cellist, founder of the string quartet of the Union of Composers of Belarus, professor, headed the Department of Chamber Ensemble.)



However, when Anna Dmitriyevna showed me the list of works that she had chosen together with Oleg Khodosko (Belarusian composer), the musical director of ... *The Diary of Memory*, who connects the 'canvas' of the performance, including some of his own musical interludes, I saw the names of all those with whom I knew and communicated, names that had been heard since childhood... And I was amazed! Genrikh Matusovich Wagner, Igor Mikhailovich Luchenok... Here are collected scores that sound so bright! I witnessed how Artem Valentinovich Makarov, our Chief Conductor, a man who came from Russia, getting acquainted with the musical material, gradually became carried away to such an extent that we listened to music for two hours. And he said that he didn't even imagine that Belarus has the most magnificent symphony and theatre schools, and such masters. And I was happy! After all, I saw these

people, I knew them. Anatoly Vasilyevich Bogatyrev, Yevgeny Aleksandrovich Glebov... These are giants! I am convinced: *The Emotional Diary of Memory* will become one of the most serious revelations for viewers. You will hear very beautiful national music...

Tatiana Aleksandrova: I look at the book that lies here on the table, and I think that it is connected with *The Emotional Diary of Memory*. The book is partly written as the history of the country, from the creation of the theatre to the present day (The book *Bolshoi Theatre of Belarus. Travel in Time* was presented on March 16th at the 31st Minsk International Book Fair. And this is 90 years of creativity of hundreds of artists and thousands of people involved in the creative process. The publication

left that are not included in the book! In fact, through the history of the building, you can trace the history of the country, starting from the thirties. There are small comments for each photo. But, of course, the main decoration is the theatre itself, its building.

Representative of the media: The official opening date of the Bolshoi Theatre is 1933?

Yekaterina Dulova: That's right, on May 25th, 1933, the opera *Carmen* was performed on the Kupalovsky stage, where the Opera and Ballet Theatre was based at that time. And on March 10th, 1939, the theatre's own building opened with Yevgeny Tikotsky's opera *Mikhas Podgorny*. And our majestic building is now 85 years old.



contains a lot of rare materials from newspapers and magazines, including unique photographs of the theatre during the years of occupation. The history of the building is a part of the history of the country. The presentation of the book, during which we enjoyed the performances of the Bolshoi Theatre artists, lasted more than an hour.

Yekaterina Dulova: Its author, Vladimir Likhodedov, became a laureate of the Union State Prize in the field of literature and art for the creation and implementation of the historical and educational project *Batskaushchyna* (*Motherland*), including for this unique book. At one time, I really wanted such a publication to appear in the anniversary year for the Bolshoi Theatre. When Vladimir Alekseyevich spoke about his proposal, we were shocked: he brought unique, rare photographs of the theatre, including photographs from the years of the occupation of Minsk. And how many materials are

(On social media, the theatre asked viewers to publish photographs, various stories, and memories associated with the theatre. Over time, these facts will be published on the Bolshoi Theatre website.)

I admit that the current year is very busy due to a series of events. And this is good, because we want the most different categories of viewers to find it interesting. (Next, Yekaterina Dulova announced the performances that were brought to Minsk by the famous St. Petersburg State Academic Theatre of Boris Eifman. The ballet *Eugene Onegin* and the play *The Seagull. A Ballet Story* were sold out.)

When I met Boris Yakovlevich Eifman, we began to communicate on friendly terms. And he began to slightly open up a new world: how he thinks, what class of choreography can be, how, on the basis of absolute classics, you can implement your fantasies in dance. I was left with a strong impression from visiting the Boris



■ Igor Kolb, Chief Choreographer of the Bolshoi Theatre of Belarus, Honoured Artist of Russia, next to his teacher Aleksandr Kolyadenko, Honoured Artist of Belarus

Eifman Dance Academy, where I was shown everything: the rehearsal process and the conditions in which its artists work. I also saw how he trains future artists for himself, how methodological approaches are formed... This communication seemed very important to me. I won't hide it, there is a preliminary agreement for this sought-after world-famous choreographer to stage a ballet here.

Representative of the media: We heard that the Bolshoi Theatre is expecting a number of significant events?

Yekaterina Dulova: We live in important times: there is a tendency to unite Slavic theatres at single festivals. (Yekaterina Nikolayevna spoke about the first International Festival of Opera *Slavic House* in Samara, in which artists of the Bolshoi Theatre of Belarus took part: Stanislav Trifonov, Andrey Valenti, Daria Gorozhanko, Anastasia Moskvina, Oksana Yakushevich, Aleksandr Mikhnyuk, as well as the Chief Conductor of the Bolshoi Theatre Artem Makarov. Yekaterina Dulova was invited by the Samara Opera and Ballet Theatre to the organising committee of the

festival. It was a festival of Russian opera, in which representatives of various Slavic schools took part — the opera division of the National Theatre of Serbia, the Donbass Opera, the Mariinsky Theatre, and the State Academic Musical Theatre of the Republic of Crimea. Belarusian artists took part in the performances *Prince Igor* and *The Queen of Spades*. The opera *The Bear* by Sergei Cortes was also performed, staged by Mikhail Panjavidze (from the Samara Opera Theatre).

And from September 7th to 10th, our ballet troupe will visit Samara at the Dmitry Shostakovich festival with the performances *Spartacus* and *Illusions of Love*.

Representative of the media: Will there be any surprise tour routes this season?

(Before answering this question, Yekaterina Dulova mentioned the 90th anniversary of the outstanding ballet teacher, Honoured Artist of Belarus Aleksandr Kolyadenko, who still teaches at the choreographic school. This is the Master who trained such famous dancers as Yuri Troyan, Konstantin Kuznetsov, Anton Kravchenko, Igor Kolb, Ivan



bolshoibelarus.by

■ Scene from the play *Illusions of Love*. Stage Director Igor Kolb

■ People's Artist of Belarus, opera soloist Stanislav Trifonov and Chief Conductor of the Bolshoi Theatre of Belarus, People's Artist of Bashkortostan Artem Makarov at the Slavic House festival in Samara. After A. Borodin's opera *Prince Igor*.





bolshoibelarus.by

■ Anna Motornaya, Chief Director of the Bolshoi Theatre, director of the opera *Iolanta*

Vasilyev, Denis Klimuk, as well as the Bolshoi youth — Vladimir Ruda and Konstantin Belokhvostik. Tribute to him was paid at the ballet *Giselle* on April 12th, at a performance dedicated to the Teacher. That evening he was in the hall with his friends and students.)

As for touring, hang in there! Just today I had some very interesting negotiations. Last fall, a delegation from Nicaragua visited our theatre, and the guests also visited the Bolshoi. It turned out that the son of Daniel Ortega, Laureano Ortega, who was part of the delegation, studied vocals at La Scala. He has his own vocal school in Nicaragua. In the first ten days of July we will take a concert to Nicaragua dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Belarus. The programme is prepared by Anna Motornaya and Igor Kolb. We will have a team of 15 people, including the conductor. On the Nicaragua side, this will be the symphony orchestra of the opera theatre and ten soloists. I think this is an important socio-political event. In my opinion, we must develop and multiply such projects. After all, the culture of music-making in Latin America itself has its own specific, interesting roots. Both vocal and instrumental. There are thousands of orchestras in Venezuela and Nicaragua... And the fact that Belarus will declare itself there will be significant.

Representative of the media: After such a tour, nothing will seem impossible for the Bolshoi Theatre...

Yekaterina Dulova: Yes, if, of course, there are financial opportunities. From October 20th to November 2nd, a serious ballet tour is planned throughout the cities of Russia: Moscow — St. Petersburg — Kazan —

Voronezh — Yoshkar-Ola — Nizhny Novgorod with six performances. And finally, from December 20th to January 5th, 2025, our orchestra and soloists will travel to the People's Republic of China. A new window of opportunity opens. I hope that in the near future we will be able to travel there as a troupe.

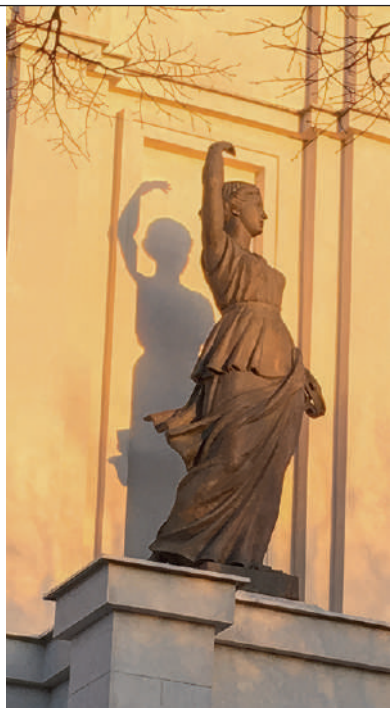
Tatiana Aleksandrova: Please introduce our guests to the new *Touring Summer*.

Yekaterina Dulova: The *Touring Summer* festival is planned for three weeks. There are already agreements with the Natalia Sats Children's State Academic Musical Theatre for the operas *Carmen* and *Thumbelina*. This is a unique theatre, which has no analogue in the world: operas and ballets are staged specifically for children. (I won't hide that there are new production plans for 2025 with the Artistic Director and Chief Director of the theatre Georgy Isaakyan. But the tour programme is still being formed.

From June 2nd to 9th, the Bolshoi will host the *Ballet Summer* festival with the participation of two companies from St. Petersburg — the Boris Eifman Dance Academy and the Leonid Yakobson Theatre. Stars from different countries will take part in the classical ballets *Swan Lake* and *La Bayadère*, and, of course, the festival will end with a Gala concert.

The most beautiful summer evenings in Nesvizh will take place from June 14th to 16th. The Bolshoi Theatre of Belarus invites you to *Evenings at the Radziwill Castle* for the 14th time. Spectators will see Adolphe Adam's ballet *Giselle*, Pyotr Tchaikovsky's opera *Iolanta*, as well as a Gala concert of opera and ballet stars of the theatre.

Tatiana Aleksandrova: Yekaterina Nikolayevna, how many hours a day do you rest?



Yekaterina Dulova: Perhaps this only happens at night.

(laughter, general excitement in the hall, words of gratitude from journalists addressed to the General Director for the high level of communication and everything else that she contributes to the creation of at the Bolshoi Theatre).

Have you seen our spring in the foyer on the second floor? There you can admire our beautiful installations — three-dimensional compositions of flowers and theatrical costumes. They create a special atmosphere and set the mood for the perception of beauty. We are doing a lot in this direction. We even went into the archives to see what we can do to surprise our audience. Of great interest are sketches of costumes and the costumes themselves, sketches of the scenery of performances that are in the repertoire and those that are no longer performed. We have an agreement with the Union of Artists to exhibit paintings in the theatre. A variety of delegations come to us, and we conduct excursions for them. We strive to enrich the viewer



■ The Bolshoi Theatre building is 85 years old



with information that they may not know. This is such a spiritual and mental attunement...

We included two ideas in the development concept of the Bolshoi Theatre of Belarus. Firstly, it is attracting young people, youth. The theatrical space can open up for them as a special territory of deep meanings. Performances can be different — funny and eccentric, but most importantly — deep. This idea is embodied in the adjustment of the repertoire and in daytime excursion programmes. I will never forget the faces of the children who once came to us from the Rogachev District. Enlightened, enthusiastic, inquisitive faces... So much keen interest... The kids drove at night, in the morning there was a tour of the city, and then they came to us... These are the moments that are not forgotten, it is then that you understand that the energy aimed at awakening the soul of a little person is priceless.

The second idea is related to the national, patriotic idea. The plans include the embodiment of the theme of the Polotsk land with its main character — Euphrosyne of Polotsk, the patroness of the Belarusian land. The idea is complex. But we will try to implement it. On what musical material: will it be an opera or a synthetic performance? Let's think about it. And I hope that the Bolshoi Theatre will gain spiritual heights with this production. For now, let's call this project *Polotsk Letters*.

Our plans, which I haven't mentioned yet, include expanding contacts with the Mariinsky Theatre and the Bolshoi Theatre of Russia.

At the end of the conversation, Yekaterina Nikolayevna thanked the journalists for their love and interest in the Bolshoi Theatre, for the pleasant moments of communication, for like-mindedness and understanding. Because, according to her, we are adjusting their plans. As our interlocutor said, she tracks all the texts about the Bolshoi that we write. She also said that she willingly communicates with other theatre managers, being convinced that other people's experience is also valuable experience if you are able to listen. Most of all, as she admitted, she would not like to make any mistake in her responsible work as the General Director of the Bolshoi. She also expressed admiration for the meeting with the President of Belarus, who spoke to the activists of the Belarusian Women's Union on the eve of International Women's Day on March 8th, and his respectful attitude towards them and their work, including women who lead large organisations.

Our conversation flew by quickly: this happens when interlocutors are interested in each other. And what



■ Spring mood.
The foyer of the second floor of
the Bolshoi Theatre.

Yekaterina Nikolayevna was talking about proved how deeply she was immersed in the affairs of the theatre and how impeccably she had information. You should have heard how inspired she was and how artistically the General Director spoke about the Bolshoi projects in the new season. And after the conversation, we went up to the second floor of the foyer to see the spring exhibition of the Bolshoi, which was discussed above. It really impressed us. It even seemed that the aroma of spring was hovering in the foyer, reminding us that she, Yekaterina Dulova, whom I would like to call only the Mistress of the Beautiful House, played a significant role in the creation of this beauty.

Valentina **Zhdanovich**

Photo by Ivan **Zhdanovich**,
as well as from the archives of the Bolshoi Theatre of Belarus

LOVE STORIES DO NOT DEPEND ON TIME

The famous St. Petersburg State Academic Ballet Theatre of Boris Eifman had a tour in Minsk. On the stage of the Bolshoi Theatre of Belarus, guests from Russia twice performed the ballet in two acts *The Seagull. A Ballet Story* to the music of Sergei Rachmaninov and Aleksandr Sitkovetsky. And the ballet in two acts *Eugene Onegin* to the music of Pyotr Tchaikovsky and Aleksandr Sitkovetsky was also performed twice.



The Boris Eifman Ballet Theatre, famous all over the world, has more than once surprised and delighted Belarusian lovers of the art of dance. This was the case during his four-day tour in Minsk. By the way, this is not the first visit of the famous troupe to Belarus. Its arrival always means a rush for tickets, a pleasant excitement in anticipation of meeting the work of the eminent choreographer-philosopher, who is concerned about the problems of our time and the secrets of creativity.

By general recognition of professional connoisseurs of choreographic art, the theatre troupe is distinguished by the highest performing skills, unique dedication and high stage intelligence. Boris Eifman's deep plans are realised by talented artists—laureates of international competitions and prestigious theatre awards in the field of culture.

The main parts of the ballets *Eugene Onegin*, a choreographic version of the novel in verse by Aleksandr Pushkin, and *The Seagull. A Ballet Story*, a choreographic interpretation of the great play by Anton Chekhov, were performed by the soloists of the Boris Eifman Theatre: Maria Abashova, Sergei Volobuev, Vladimir Afonichkin,

Artem Lepkov, Yelizaveta Khokhlova, Viktoria Mokrousova and others. It was especially pleasant to see on stage a graduate of the Belarusian Choreographic College, ex-soloist of the Bolshoi Theatre of Belarus (2009-2011), and currently, figuratively speaking, a star of the first magnitude — Lyubov Andreyeva. We, representatives of the media, met with her, as well as with Maria Abashova and Vladimir Afonichkin, in the foyer of the theatre before the opening of the tour.

The press approach of journalists to the guests of the Bolshoi Theater was traditionally opened by General Director Yekaterina Dulova. She called the theatre's tour from St. Petersburg a great event in the cultural life of Belarus. According to Yekaterina Nikolayevna, cooperation with the Boris Eifman Theatre troupe is important for both parties. She also spoke about the high professionalism of the team. Paying tribute to the choice of musical accompaniment for the performances, she called it a win-win.

"Of course, the choice of music: Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov, as well as the magnificent author Aleksandr Sitkovetsky, who works with the scores and reworks them as the choreographer needs, is a modern approach.



bolshoi-belarus.by

TOUR

■ During the press approach of media representatives



■ Yulia Zaitseva



■ Maria Abashova

Valentina Zhdanovich



■ Vladimir Afonichkin



■ Lyubov Andreyeva



■ Igor Kolb

Our school is in many ways connected with St. Petersburg, and this trend is very important for us..."

Maria Abashova began her speech with words of gratitude to Rosconcert, which organised the tour in accordance with the All-Russian Tour and Concert Plan of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation. By the way, Rosconcert representative Yulia Zaitseva, Deputy Head of the Rosconcert Tour Programmes Department, explained that the tour and concert plan is a unique and large-scale project of the Russian Ministry of Culture, which allows each creative group to receive state support. Every year Rosconcert considers a record number of applications for participation in the tour and concert plan, and a large number of them are satisfied. This year, 273 theatres and 65 national groups received support. We learned from Yulia Zaitseva that the Boris Eifman Theatre has been

participating in the tour and concert plan since 2020, and goes on tour every year. After Minsk, the theatre will travel to Russian cities.

We also learned that the Bolshoi Theatre of Belarus has also joined the tour plan in 2023 and will go on a tour of Russia in October.

Maria Abashova informed us that she would be involved in both performances. In *The Seagull* she will dance Irina Arkadina, and in *Eugene Onegin* she will dance Tatiana Larina. On the closing day of the tour, this part will be danced by Lyubov Andreyeva. What was difficult for Maria Abashova in working on performances?

"When I danced Nina Zarechnaya in 2007, I thought that later I would dance Arkadina. And now I'm dancing it and thinking: what will happen next... But these, of course, are fleeting thoughts. Every time I go on stage is a moment of

joy for me. My Arkadina is a woman, a mother, a prima ballerina, and a companion of the great choreographer Trigorin. And theatre for me is the language of the soul, which we speak through the art of dance. It encourages us to think about what we are like, how we live, what we think, what we feel. And the whole love story of Tatyana Larina, whom I relate to very tenderly, does not depend on time.” Lyubov Andreyeva, a native of Minsk, admitted how pleased she was to be in her hometown, as well as at the Bolshoi Theatre, where she worked for about three years, and subsequently danced on this stage several times already as a soloist of the Eifman Theatre. She also talked about how she once ran as a spectator to the first version of *The Seagull* and to the ballet *Anna Karenina*, with which Eifman’s troupe came to Minsk in 2010, and how impressed she was by what she saw. And so much so that all she could

say to herself after the performances was: this is incredible, this is amazing...

“When people ask me about our productions: is it classic or modern, I answer: it’s Eifman! Eifman, who, when starting to stage a play, always starts from the meaning. Therefore, our ballets are understandable to the public. Even if the audience was not familiar with the works on which the performances were staged. It is a pleasure to work with Boris Yakovlevich. On the closing day of the tour I will dance Tatiana Larina in *Eugene Onegin*.”

Does she get tired while rehearsing performances, so much so that she wants to quit everything?

“Sometimes I can’t get up in the morning. But then you put yourself together, get up, slowly begin to warm up, and your body responds and comes to life. And you’re already in shape! And every time you understand: movement is life!”

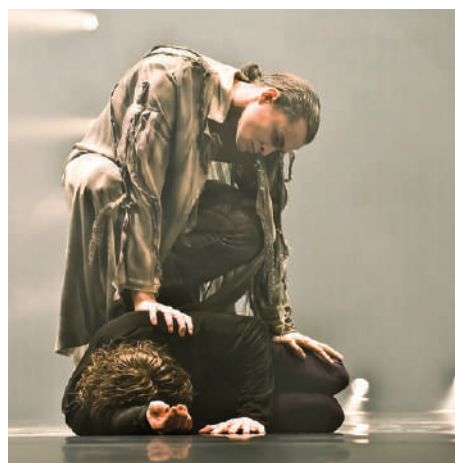
Vladimir Afonichkin danced the leading role in the play *The Seagull* — Kostya Treplev, and in *Eugene Onegin* — Lensky. The soloist admitted to us that he really likes his complex role of Treplev who, according to the plan of Eifman is an innovator, an experimenter who is trying to bring new forms into the world, but the world is resisting it.

Chief Choreographer of the Bolshoi Theatre of Belarus, Honoured Artist of Russia Igor Kolb, noting the originality of the choreography of Boris Eifman’s theatre, as well as its contribution to the development of ballet art, said, “Boris Yakovlevich is the person who clearly knows what he wants, and he moulds

eifmanballet.com



■ Scenes from the performances
The Seagull. A Ballet Story
and *Eugene Onegin*





bolshoibelarus.by

■ Boris Eifman Theatre Troupe

the actor's structure to suit himself, as if from plasticine. And I really like it. An actor doesn't even have to be talented. Thanks to Eifman's diligence and talent, each artist becomes an individual in his hands. I am very glad that my students also work in the troupe of this great Master."

We saw choreographic versions of works by Anton Chekhov and Aleksandr Pushkin in a new interpretation. Boris Eifman himself said this best.

"There are books and topics that have haunted me for years, provoking me to intense intellectual search. Chekhov's *The Seagull* is a brilliant example of such a work. Behind the external regularity of the plot in the play hides a labyrinth of the most important philosophical ideas. The action in our performance is moved from the estate to the rehearsal hall, where the experimenter Treplev, obsessed with the search for new dance forms, confronts the successful choreographer Trigorin, who is staging his version of *Swan Lake*, and the young artist Zarechnaya competes with the imperious prima Arkadina."

As for *Eugene Onegin*, I will quote the words of the Master, "I transferred Pushkin's heroes to our days, to new circumstances, more dramatic, even extreme, when the old world collapses and life dictates new rules. I needed this experiment in order to answer the question that worries me: what is the Russian soul today? Has it retained its originality, its mystery, its attractiveness? How would the characters of the novel decide their fate today? What in the 'encyclopaedia of Russian life' was the stamp of time, and what became a sign of the fate of many generations of my fellow citizens?"

The art of Boris Eifman is a generally recognised new trend in ballet art. What was already clear in 1977, when the first performances of the St. Petersburg State Academic Ballet Theatre (the original name of the troupe was the Leningrad New Ballet), which he created, were successful, forcing people to talk about these trends in Russian ballet art. Since then, for several decades, success has accompanied the performances of Boris Eifman's troupe in Europe, Asia, North and South America, and Australia. And, of course, here, in Belarus.

"Turning to great literature in my performances," Boris Eifman admitted, "I try to express through the art of choreography the emotional shock of contact with the wisdom and creative power of our brilliant predecessors. The word is an instrument of creation and destruction; it can revive or destroy.

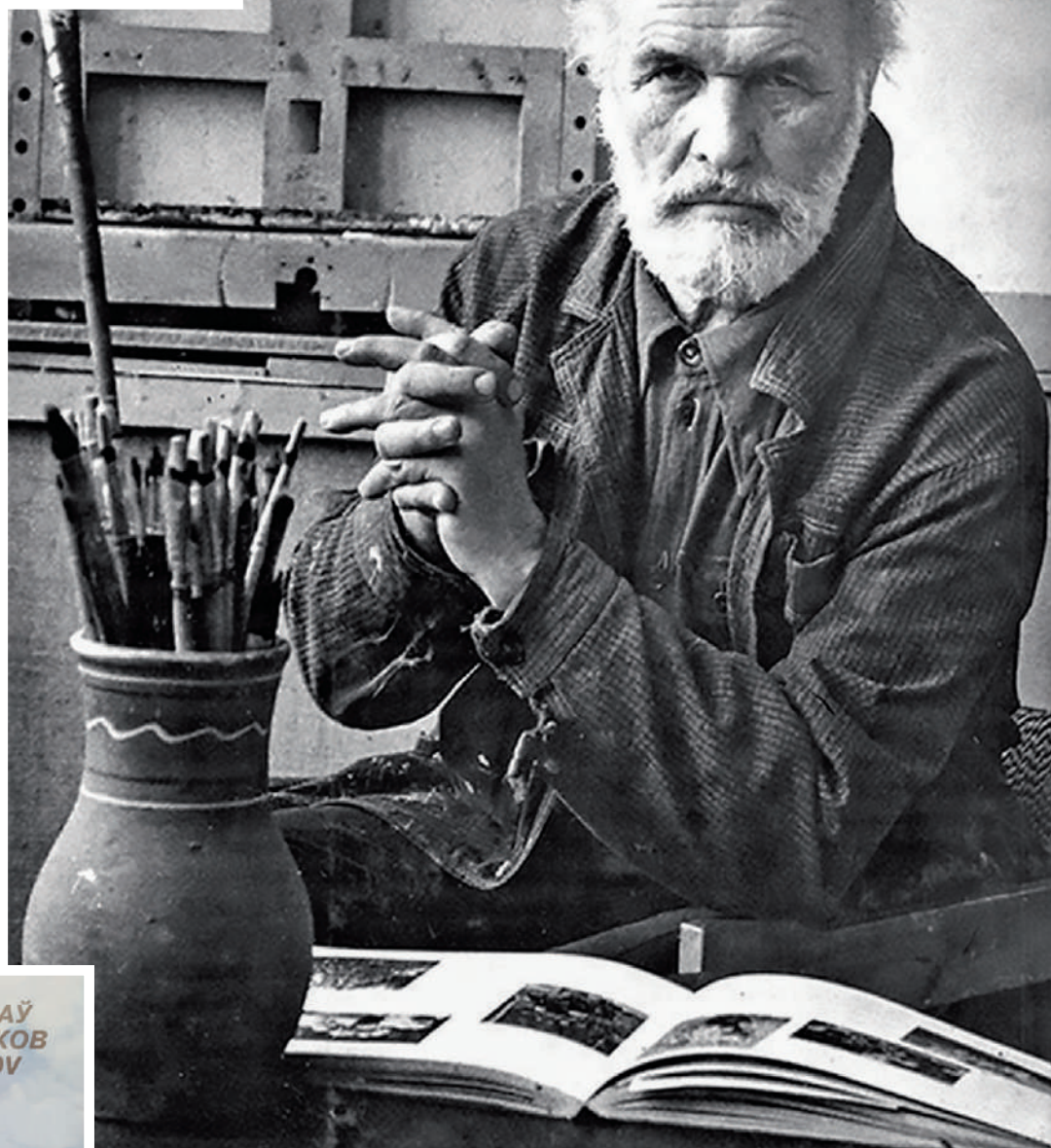
Body language, as an older way of self-expression, carries universally understood emotional and spiritual values. And turning to the literary source, my goal is to reveal what can excite my contemporaries today, what can only be expressed by the great art of choreography."

Boris Eifman's ballet is a psychological ballet. It draws viewers into the world of human passions, establishes living spiritual connections with the public, and stuns with the brightness and dynamism of his plastic language. We saw and felt all this during the performances of *The Seagull*. A Ballet Story and *Eugene Onegin*, which we watched with bated breath. And we were assured once again that love stories are timeless.

Valentina **Zhdanovich**



NATURE'S UNIQUE FEATURES

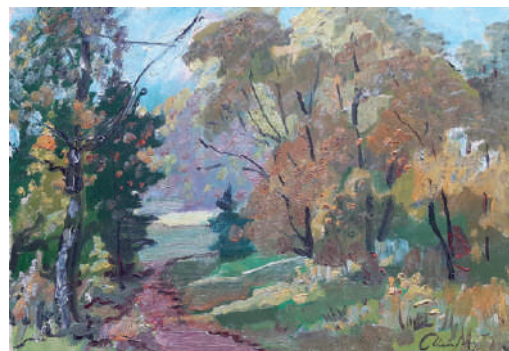


ПАВЕЛ МАСЛЕНИКАЎ
ПАВЕЛ МАСЛЕНИКОВ
PAVEL MASLENIKOV

The canvases of the People's Artist of Belarus Pavel Maslenikov depict those corners of his native land, which, according to his own statements, constitute an exciting image of the Motherland. It was through the landscape that the artist was able to express his patriotic feelings.

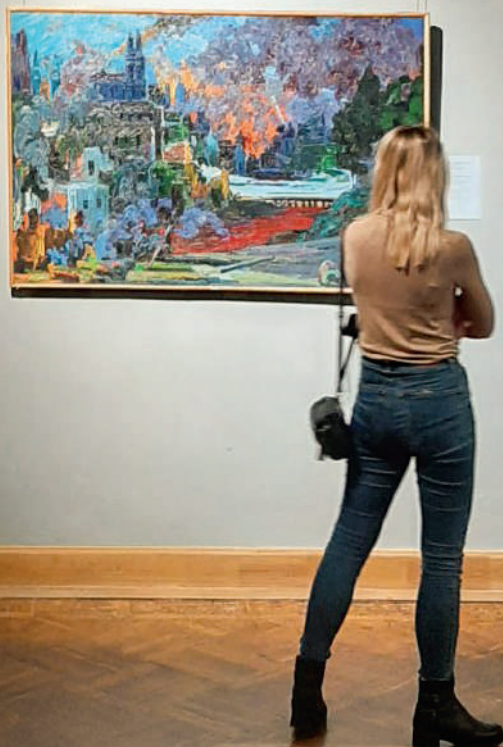
February marked the 110th anniversary of the birth of People's Artist of Belarus Pavel Maslenikov. At the same time, the National Art Museum hosted the grand opening of the exhibition *Creative Perspectives: Earth, Water, Sky* by this outstanding master of lyrical-epic landscape, who was also a theatre art designer, critic and a talented teacher. The exhibition, which featured about fifty paintings by the master from the collection of the National Art Museum, the Belarusian Union of Artists, the Mogilev Regional Art Museum named after P. V. Maslenikov, the Museum of the History of the City of Minsk and the artist's family, was shown back in April.

Pavel Maslenikov's interest in understanding the beauty of his native land did not arise by chance. While still studying at the Vitebsk Art College, he painted a lot of landscapes and sketches. Unfortunately, they all perished during the war. Already in the post-war years, he worked for more than two decades at the Belarusian State Academic Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre as a production designer. With his real obsession with the theatre, he made a great contribution to the development of decorative art in Belarus. However, his love for his native nature did not leave him even then. Later, in the 60s, when Pavel Maslenikov left the theatre, he began to devote much more time to creating landscape works. It was in the next three decades that his best lyrical landscapes appeared, many of which became real pearls of Belarusian painting of the second half of the twentieth century.



View of the native land

Without a doubt, Pavel Maslenikov belongs to that generation of Belarusian artists whose work has absorbed the best traditions of the painting school. At the exhibition at the National Art Museum, it was easy to notice that each of his canvases is filled with colour harmony, and the author's picturesque palette is in tune with the soft and calm coloring of Belarusian nature. Together with brushes and paints, he 'explored' known and at the same time not yet fully known places. He searched and found more and more new motifs, because he realised long ago that his native land is capable of constantly surprising the artist's eye. First of all, with unusual natural landscapes. That is why the painter developed his own figurative style of landscape, in which the reflection of boundless natural beauty predominates. Very often, such



picturesque panoramas in the works of Pavel Maslenikov are cut through by the free flow of rivers, in which the characteristic features of the Western Dvina, Dnieper, Neman, and Berezina are recognised. With their twists and turns they always fascinated and lured artists into unknown, mysterious distances. Without a doubt, the artist himself perceived his native nature as a source of creative inspiration. In general, this undoubtedly very talented painter had so many individual discoveries that completely unexpected creative prospects easily opened up for him. The idea of endless space, figuratively encoded in the landscape solutions of Pavel Maslenikov, necessarily implied the introduction of a high sky into the picture plane, which fascinates with its inexhaustible cosmic azure. The artist also has such symbolic compositions, where the heavenly peaks are outlined by 'huge mountains' of dark clouds or penetrated by the sun's rays breaking through the cloudy haze. This figurative element in his works gives the appearance of his native land in its picturesque vision greater significance and expressiveness, which corresponds to its natural purity and pristineness. Indeed, a large crowd of people was present at the opening of the anniversary exhibition of Pavel Maslenikov at the National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus. Many warm words were said in honour of the author of the exhibition: for his creative individuality, for his teaching activities, for his human traits. And at the exhibition itself, works were exhibited that represented a kind of retrospective

of the artist's works through space and time. The exhibition on display was, of course, dominated by the landscapes.

Son about the father

In general, the Maslenikov family is widely known both among Belarusian artists and among art lovers. The impetus for this, of course, was given by Pavel Maslenikov, who received the title of People's Artist of Belarus for his undoubted talent and professional achievements. But today his son, Vladimir Maslenikov, is a bright successor of his father's artistic traditions. Of course, Vladimir has his own creative image, his works are well known. Although there is no way to escape the concept of 'dynasty', especially since there are new successors to the artistic legacy of Pavel Maslenikov in the family.

Excerpts from a conversation with Vladimir Maslenikov, during which it becomes clear that the origins of his professional activity largely stem from the example of his father.

"What was the decisive factor for you in choosing a profession? When did this come?"

"The decisive factor was that my father was an artist. When did it come? At the age of four I had not yet drawn, but I had already said that I would be an artist and a driver. In the end, this is what happened: I became an artist and an avid amateur driver: I've been driving a car since I was thirteen."

"It's probably not easy to be in the light of such a star as the



People's Artist of Belarus Pavel Maslenikov?"

"It is very difficult. Especially if you are a young artist who has just graduated from university. For almost half my life I had to prove that I was not only the son of Pavel Maslennikov, but also had my own value. Therefore, when I graduated from the institute, for the first years I basically did not exhibit at landscape exhibitions. I exhibited mostly portraits: so as not to be compared to my father. Then I gradually came to the landscape, because it is close to me. However, I also paint portraits."

"What impressed you most about your father's work?"

"His unbridled efficiency was impressive. My father worked hard all his life. He took me with him to sketches throughout my childhood. This is how the love for the landscape manifested itself. We traveled all over Belarus. When we went to Crimea, we also made sure to take with us canvases, a cordon, and sketchbooks. One day we went to Gurzuf – all the people went to the beach, and we went to the mountains for sketches. We made four sketches a day. It has become so ingrained that I no longer go anywhere without a sketchbook. When my wife and I went to Crimea, we were still young, I also took a sketchbook, no one forced me".

"Just like your father, you depict Belarusian nature in your works. Do you feel close to it? Or do you just paint what you like?"

"I practically never leave Belarus now: family, summer house, countryside. At the same time, in our country there are such wonderful and diverse places: plains, lakes, and hills... Each state of nature is beautiful in its own way: snow, rain, and sun."

"Has your father seen your work? Was there any creative exchange or instruction? How did it all happen?"

"Father was very stingy with praise. He believed that when you graduated from college, this does not mean that you have become a professional artist. You still have to gain experience. And even when the first successes began to come to me, my father – we worked in the same workshop – did not interfere with my creativity. Until I asked for something. He was a strong-willed man, but he behaved delicately. The praise was somewhat indirect. For example, he could come

from an exhibition to say that his guys (and the guys meant his generation of artists) told him that I had stood out. This meant the highest praise."

"It must have been nice to hear that?"

"Certainly. Even more so, knowing the reserved character of my father. It was a kind of recognition. I had such respect for my father that the highest praise for me came from him. If he expressed his recognition, it meant that my work was good. Just like my opinion is important for my sons today. When the eldest (Pavel Maslenikov) studied at the Academy of Arts, I came to the viewing and said that he had grown so much. And he didn't get very good grades. He then replied that he was glad to hear such words about his work from me. He mentioned that while they had given him good grades at art school, I had only criticised him all the time."

"It turns out that the Maslenikov dynasty as artists continues. But what do you think: why did your eldest son also become an artist?"





“Moreover, my youngest son Aleksei has a degree of a designer. And my daughter-in-law is an artist. As for Pavel, when he was only five years old, I couldn’t get him out of the workshop. Probably, he was already destined to follow the path of his father and grandfather. I can advise and guide him in this matter. Naturally, he succeeds in doing something. As a child, I myself said that I would be an artist, although I didn’t really understand what that was. My father was still working as a production designer at the theatre – I grew up, one might say, in the opera house... In a word, if an example is before your eyes, it greatly influences the choice of your future profession.”

“When your father lived, it was one time, now it’s another. Is the creative process changing?”

“Maybe. If we take the last thirty years, more directions in creativity have opened up. I am a realist, but I think it’s great. It’s good that we are not the same.”

“Is now a favourable time for creativity?”

“In Soviet times, there were government orders. Now there are practically none, everything is very individual. Some are in demand, others not so much. However, I believe that today’s time is favourable for creativity. And it’s good that art is in demand.”

“How much do you take into account the market situation? If you paint a picture, do you want it to be liked? Or do you only paint what you want to express?”

“For me, fortunately, everything is the same: others like what I want to reflect, the way I do it. This is happiness.”

“What is the creative credo of the artist Vladimir Maslenikov?”

“Truth of life. My father spoke about this more than once.”

“Undoubtedly, like your father, you are an artist more inclined to realistic fine art. What is its essence?”

“My father painted using life as his inspiration and so do I. We have painted hundreds of sketches in different parts of Belarus. Just as small streams gather into a huge river, so full-scale sketches are the basis for working on a large compositional landscape that reflects the beauty of our native nature. The main thing is that the result should be something like this: I look at the work and want to go there, to the river bank... I had a case. I painted a landscape composed entirely by myself, without any real basis. I called it Lepel Lakes (an area in the Vitebsk Region). The driver who takes paintings to exhibitions came and asked about it. I said that it was Lepel Lakes. He said that it was really it as he had fished there. However, it was an imaginary place. There must be a cognitive state in the work. Hence the desire to walk along the reflected field. I, like my father, try to convey personal feelings and emotional perception of nature to the future viewer through my paintings.”

“And is it easy?”

“Not always. Sometimes the work comes together very quickly, sometimes you suffer, redo it, rearrange it. Or you can suffer and in the end you achieve nothing. This is rare, but it does happen.”



“Do you think that today in the fine arts the realistic style is not losing ground? It is known that in Europe painting has recently gravitated more towards abstract forms. Do you think we should be proud that our worthy school of realistic painting still exists? Including the one coming from Pavel Maslenikov. And what examples of artists are there who are still working highly professionally in this field?”

“I think we can be proud of this. Although, to tell the truth, realistic painting is gradually losing ground. Young people are less and less proficient in this art. But I am not a supporter of division: realism or not realism. The main thing is to be professional. There must be professional and competent art. And it is not that important in what genre and in what direction. Once the Italians came to see me. What a school of painting there was in Italy! And now that is it, there's nothing. But we have it! And, by the way, the preparatory school at the Academy of Arts is very good.”

“It's easier for you to evaluate because you yourself have been involved in teaching for many years. You can probably see who is growing up, who will replace you. What about tomorrow in the visual arts? Did your father like this prospect?”

“I think a person needs to be taught. How he will work when he becomes a professional is his business, but he must go to a professional school. Must be able to do everything. You have to go in certain directions not because you can do it, but because you came to it with your own mind. That this is exactly how you want to work! I think my father would support me in such thoughts.”

“How do you feel about participating in exhibitions?”

“When I graduated from the art institute, I participated in almost all republican exhibitions: both group and personal, of which I already had at least five. I exhibit constantly and I think that this is necessary to see myself among others. Sometimes the work seems to be quite good, but at the exhibition it seems of little interest. Or vice versa. Exhibitions are needed to evaluate yourself realistically and objectively.”

“Considering how the field of fine art is developing, what does its future look like? Is this process not interrupted?”

“I think everything will be fine. The older generation says: we were like that, but the youth are not like us. Yet youth is the same as we were before. I am an optimist.”

“Are you self-critical?”

“Very. Even sometimes it even bothers me.”

“What do you consider the main thing in your work?”

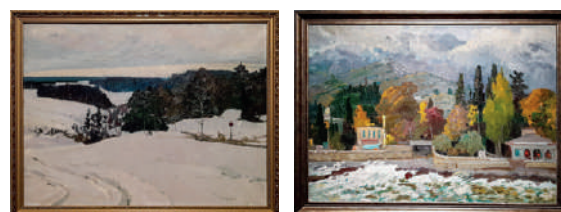
“To improve in the direction in which I work. There is no limit to perfection. I want to work in landscape, portrait, and perhaps still life. I try myself in different genres. I really like painting portraits: different images, different characters.”

“Can you paint a portrait of any person?”

“Yes. But I usually paint those who are interesting to me. Most of all I painted my loved ones – father, mother, children, sister. If a person is interesting not only spiritually, but also has interesting images externally, then, of course, it is more interesting to paint such persons.”

Vladimir Maslenikov proved himself to be an observant and very subtle psychologist in the portrait genre. He shows





people he knows well. Always finds the best human qualities in them. His portrait gallery is constantly replenished with new images of contemporaries who want to see their picturesque transformation, trusting the artist's talent.

"Are you familiar with the concept of creative failure or stagnation?"

"Failures happen, of course. But they are relative. I may consider some work unsuccessful, but the viewer will not notice it. And vice versa. What about stagnation? You just have to work, that's all. As my father said, if you wait for inspiration, you may not get it. I came, took a brush in my hands – inspiration will come."

"Today, can an artist make a living from his paintings? As you said, there used to be government orders, but now there are none. Is it worse or better for the artist?"

"When there were orders, then very little work was purchased outside of them. Now there are no orders, but, for example, they buy more paintings from me than before: organisations, just citizens in galleries. If an artist does not sell his works, not only will he not provide for his family, he simply will not provide himself with the materials to paint a new work, and will not be able to pay for the workshop."

"Do you manage to track the artistic process that takes place in other countries?"

"I can judge this only based on the plein airs that are held here. Artists from different countries work in different directions of modern painting. But the traditions of the realistic school are still strongest in Belarus and Russia. Belarusian artists today worthily represent the realistic school and show a high professional level."

"Aren't you imposing your style on anyone else?"

"No way. My father taught me this. I don't want everyone to paint like that. Although over the last decade I have seen a lot of copies of my works in different places. Why impose yours? On the contrary, an artist needs to try to find his niche. The more different artists, the better"

"Often in an artist's early works you sometimes find more interesting motifs than in his later work. How did it happen for you?"

"During my student years, many things were perceived differently. I did everything less meaningfully back then. There was hesitation: back and forth. It was a search. But still I came to what I do today. Over the years I have improved. If you take my work from 30 years ago, it is much weaker than what I will do now. Incomparably. I think I'm on the right path. Without any jumps, gradually. And my father would probably be pleased with this."

"Don't you get tired of painting?"

"I enjoy it. I think that I am a lucky person. Like many artists doing what they love. They like it and sometimes they get paid money for it. If it happens that I'm overworked, then in the summer I go to the summer house. I have a workshop there too. There are breaks, sometimes I don't pick up a brush for a whole week. I'm not a fisherman, not a hunter, my only hobby is cars. If I don't drive for a week, my hands itch."

"Is there a collective image in your works?"

"Yes, sure. I believe that on such large formats as mine there cannot be live work. This is already a compositional painting, for example, this one (shows the work that hangs in the studio). It is called My Belarus. The collective image here is our open spaces. As you can see, like my father, I



have water almost everywhere. Lakes, forests and distances – all this is our Belarus.”

“There is a museum named after your father in Mogilev. Is the museum in demand? Do the works give people the opportunity to learn more about the artist Pavel Maslenikov?”

“This is the regional art museum named after Maslenikov. There’s a lot of my father’s work there. There is a wing where the personal gallery of the People’s Artist of Belarus Pavel Maslenikov is located. There are three halls and a memorial room. Very large funds. Because my father himself donated a lot of his work there. After his death, I also handed over more than forty paintings, sketches of scenery, costumes – a lot of things. I think his best work is there. After all, he practically handed over his entire exhibition dedicated to the eightieth anniversary. And this is, of course, stage work. He previously exhibited in Minsk, and then went to Mogilev and donated all this to the city. First the gallery was opened, then the name was given to the museum when he died. I go there every year. International plein air painting events take place there. Artists come to plein airs from all over the CIS, from far abroad: France, Austria, Serbia, Bulgaria and other countries. Schoolchildren come on an excursion. Everyone gets very excited. Then they even hold traveling exhibitions with lectures. There’s work going on there. The museum building is very interesting, from the last century. They did a good restoration and renovation. And there are already more than forty of my works there.”

The colours come to life in the gold of the sun and the green of the fields...

It would not be an exaggeration to say that People’s Artist of Belarus Pavel Maslenikov was and remains one of the most

impressive Belarusian masters of modern landscape. He is the author of significant compositions, who purposefully developed an epic cycle dedicated to Belarusian nature. However, personal pictorial research and creative searches gave him the opportunity to find answers to philosophical questions related to life.

All this, of course, is in tune with the principles of Pavel Maslenikov, who perceived Belarusian nature as the primary source of inexhaustible creative insights, where the leading dominant is the desire for a sublime and harmonious sense of reality. This was the essence of all his creative thinking. It justified itself by constantly updating the author’s painting techniques. It is not for nothing, for example, that the coloristic consonance of the motifs of his native land in his works is often emphasised by the state of their spring and summer blossoming, when bright colours come to life in the gold of the sun and the green of the fields, drowning in the deep blue of the sky.





It must be said that Pavel Maslenikov is one of the few modern Belarusian artists who perfectly mastered the gradation of warm and cold colours. He masterfully managed to convey the air space, the play of sunlight in the foliage of trees, in the field 'waves' of young ears, in the living mirror of the water surface. That is why his landscapes, life-affirming in their figurative and coloristic state, are always so reverent. And in the most natural way they instill in the viewer a sense of beauty.

Meanwhile, in addition to vast panoramas, the artist often turned to more intimate motifs of quiet backwaters, forest paths, and birch groves. These author's stories are filled with a subtle inner state. They can be called 'islands' of natural impressions, which are often stored in memory from early childhood. Such picturesque motifs are in demand today more than ever. And above all, those who are often cut off from nature: they live in a rather monotonous urban environment. The master was sensitively aware of this problem and tried to push the boundaries of 'concrete reality' as much as possible. To return, thanks to a creative feeling, the feelings and emotions of his many fans to the green kingdom of nature.

Not just a favourite topic

Still, it's not for nothing that we talk so much about the landscapes of Pavel Maslenikov. After all, in essence, they are poetic short stories about the native land, made with skill and impeccable artistic taste. Among such works, especially good

are those in which the image of the native land is glorified accurately, with an amazingly acute sense of nature and its conditions.

In general, landscapes were not just the artist's favourite theme. This is a complete reflection of his creative personality, his searches and achievements. This is the immediate thing that fascinates both the venerable connoisseur and the ordinary viewer upon meeting him. Maslenikov's landscapes are truthful, full of restrained lyricism, and figurative. You will recognise the author immediately, without a signature, by the distinctive nature of the painting, which harmoniously combines the accuracy of the image with deep poetry, the fidelity of the drawing with the beauty of the shades. And most importantly, you can easily recognise it by the national flavor that permeates all of Pavel Maslenikov's work.

The artist studied his native nature so well and saw so much beauty in it that he had no need to go far. He discovered an inexhaustible wealth of themes, states, and subtle pictorial relationships near Minsk, in the Mogilev Region. And each time it was something new, which today enriches the viewer, makes him look more closely at the world around him, and love it more deeply.

Without exaggeration, objectively: he knew how to find unique features in nature. However, speaking about the paintings of Pavel Maslenikov, one cannot help but return again and again to that bright national flavour that essentially colors all of his work.

Veniamin **Mikheyev**



ТРЭБА ДОМА БЫВАЦЬ НЕ ГОСЦЕМ...

Вясенняя творчая стажыроўка беларусаў замежжа, якую арганізоўвае Міністэрства культуры і Рэспубліканскі цэнтр нацыянальных культур, ў гэтым годзе ўпершыню была вузка накіраванай. Калі раней стажыроўкі збіралі кіраўнікоў грамадскіх арганізацый і прадстаўнікоў творчых калектываў і ім прапаноўвалі разнастайныя сустрэчы і заняткі, то ў гэтым годзе было прынята рашэнне спачатку зрабіць асобную навучальную праграму для майстроў дэкаратыўна-прыкладной творчасці, а ўвосень запрасіць харэографіў і вакалістаў. Па новыя веды прыехалі людзі, якія ў месцах свайго пражывання працуюць з рознымі матэрыяламі: саломкай, дрэвам, лямцам, вышываюць, робяць лялек, праводзяць заняткі з дзецьмі і моладдзю, на якіх знаёмяць з беларускай культурай.



■ Выступленне Народнага ансамбля беларускай музыкі і песні "Ярыца"

Падсілкавацца беларускай культурай, пазнаёміцца з майстрамі, паўдзельнічаць у майстар-класах гэтым разам змаглі прадстаўнікі шасці краін: Арменіі, Казахстана, Расійскай Федэрацыі, Латвіі, Эстоніі, Узбекістана.

Кожная такая стажыроўка – сапраўднае свята не толькі для гасцей, але і для прымаючага боку. Тут асабліва энергетыка, эмоцыі, пытанні, шчырыя словы і шчымлівыя гісторыі пра тугу па радзіме, часам са слязьмі на вачах. Гэта таксама прага да ведаў і пошуку.

КАРАНІ ЦЯГНУЦЬ ДА ДОМУ

Традыцыйна стажыроўку адкрывала “раніца знаёмстваў”, калі ўдзельнікі расказвалі пра тое, што робіцца ў краіне пражывання для захавання і папулярызавання беларускай культуры, дзеліліся ўласнымі гісторыямі.

Падчас такіх распеваў беларусы замежжа часам знаходзяць сваіх землякоў, агульных знаёмых, а таксама прапануюць калегам далучыцца да сваіх праектаў. Так, старшыня таварыства Рэгіянальнай нацыянальна-культурнай аўтаноміі беларусаў Іркуцкай вобласці Алена Сіпакова запрасіла на форум “Беларусы свету на Байкале”, які пройдзе ў Сібіры ў наступным годзе. “З намі працуюць установы культуры і дадатковай адукацыі і ўлада. На нас ляжыць вялікая адказнасць за тых веды, што мы нясём. Вельмі важна гэта рабіць ясна, заўважыла Алена Сіпакова. – Мы ствараем нацыянальныя, сцэнічныя строі, лялек ў нацыянальнай вопратцы. Нават пры вырабе стылізацыі важна, каб гэта ўсё было пададзена дакладна. Так, людзі ў Беларусі могуць апрануць строй любога колеру.



■ Алена Сіпакова падчас сустрэчы з міністрам культуры Беларусі Анатолем Маркевічам

А беларусам, што жывуць па-за яе межамі, асабліва ў шматнацыянальным рэгіёне, трэба зрабіць такі строй, каб усе дакладна ідэнтыфікавалі, які народ яны прадстаўляюць. Мы абралі шлях захавання беларускай самабытнасці”.

У Іркуцкай вобласці беларускі рух існуе ўжо 28 гадоў, дзякуючы чаму выхадцы з Беларусі, іх нашчадкі аб’ядноўваюцца ў суполкі. Тут праводзяцца традыцыйныя святы з народнага календара. Зараз яны запісваюцца на відэа і выкладваюцца ў сацыяльныя сеткі. У Прыбайкаллі праходзіць фестываль “Гучы, гоман беларускі!”, куды прыязджаюць беларусы з другіх рэгіёнаў Расіі. Тут будуць рады і суайчыннікам

з іншых краін. Напрыклад, у гэтым годзе можна прыехаць на міжнародны фестываль беларускай творчасці “Багач” і Траебор’е па копцы бульбы. “Перад намі стаіць задача захаваць той скарб, які быў сабраны за 28 гадоў, актуалізаваць гэтыя веды, каб яны мелі каштоўнасць не толькі для беларусаў, а наогул для жыхароў Іркуцкай вобласці. Мы імкнёмся весці сваю работу і як метадычнага цэнтра, дзе можна знайсці адказы на пытанні, звязаныя з беларускай культурай”, – заўважыла Алена Сіпакова.

Месную нацыянальную культурную аўтаномію беларусаў горада Іркуцк узначальвае Юлія Пермінава. Яе маці нарадзілася ў Докшыцкім раёне, а ў сяле Сітцы



■ Віктар і наталля Сінкевічы прыехалі з вескі Тургенеўка Іркуцкай вобласці

жыве яе цётка. Маці, якая была адной з першых членаў беларускага таварыства ў Іркуцкай вобласці, далучыла Юлію да сваёй справы – захавання беларускай культуры. “Беларуская дыяспара ў Іркуцкай вобласці самая вялікая, распаўсюджаная. Менавіта мы першыя праводзілі аўтэнтычнае Купалле, падавалі як традыцыю, а не проста вяселле. Сёння наша Купалле перарасло ў этнафестываль, на які мы запрашаем прадстаўнікоў славянскіх культур. Праводзім Каляды, Гуканне вясны, Юр’е. У нас ёсць ансамбль “Беларусы Прыбайкалля”. Займаемся саломалляцтвам, тчэм паясы. Вышываем, робім сабе строі. Мая маці самастойна засвоіла чатырохрамізнае ткацтва”.

У Сібір у часы Сталыпінскай рэформы беларусы перасяляліся цэлымі вёскамі. Адну з іх – Тургенеўку Баяндаеўскага раёна Іркуцкай вобласці – на стажыроўцы прадстаўлялі Віктар і Наталля Сінкевічы. У мінулым годзе пра гэты куток адным з вядомых

адзначылі, што гэта выдатны шанц адчуць, разгадаць таямніцы беларускай культуры, павучыцца традыцыям, каб у сваю чаргу іх перадаць дзецям. Яны працуюць педагогамі і ўпэўнены, што вельмі важна паказваць дзецям розныя культуры, адкрываць магчымасці, вучыцца цаніць і паважаць іншыя народы, і такім чынам вырашчаць пакаленне, якое будзе несці святло, духоўнасць і дабрыню, наладжваць міжнародныя стасункі. “Нічога не бывае выпадковага. Так, я ўпершыню ў Беларусі. Але нашы карані прасочваюцца, мы адчуваем сувязі. І што цікава, многія беларусы, якія жывуць у нас, кажуць, што хочуць сюды. Я захапляюся беларускай культурай, тым, наколькі яна аб’ядноўвае людзей”, – расказала Аксана Трыфанава.

Наогул на стажыроўцы, вельмі многія ўдзельнікі дзяліліся марамі не толькі аб тым, каб як мага часцей прыязджаць дамоў, але і аб жаданні вярнуцца. У Іркуцкай вобласці, напрыклад, запатрабаваны курсы беларускай мовы сярод тых, хто плануе паехаць жыць у Беларусь. Школа па вывучэнні беларускай мовы патрэбна і ў Казахстане. Беларусы Латвіі адзначаюць, што нідзе не адчуваюць сябе так камфортна, і не сустракаюць такіх адкрытых людзей, як у Беларусі. Пра сувязі з бацькаўшчынай можа сведчыць нават тапаніміка. У Расіі вёскі, дзе сяліліся выхадцы з Беларусі, маюць адпаведныя назвы. У Латвіі адзін з раёнаў паміж сабой людзі завуць “Шаркаўшчынай”, бо там пражываюць выхадцы з гэтага рэгіёна. Прадстаўніцы Самарскай абласной грамадскай арганізацыі



■ У Нацыянальным прэс-цэнтры прайшла сустрэча, прысвечаная пытанням захавання беларусамі замежна культурнай спадчыны

расійскіх рэжысёраў быў зняты дакументальны фільм “Тургенеўскія беларусы”. Гэта сібірская вёска – пабрацім Моталя. І таму тут вырашылі пазычыць адну з мотальскіх традыцый: 15 верасня ў Прыбайкаллі будзе праводзіцца першы гастронамічны фестываль – “Тургенеўскія прысмакі”. З мінулай стажыроўкі Віктар Сінкевіч прывёз адзін з новых сартоў бульбы “Першацвет”, выведзены беларускімі вучонымі. Высветлілася, што ён добра расце ў Сібіры. На навінку ў гаспадароў вялікія спадзяванні – яна спатрэбіцца на тургенеўскім бульбяным фестывалі.

Упершыню ў Беларусь на стажыроўку прыехалі прадстаўніцы нацыянальнага культурнага цэнтру беларусаў Заўралля “Бацькаўшчына”. Жанчыны



■ Старшыня Латвійскага таварыства беларускай культуры “Вытокі” Таісія Бачкарова

беларусаў і выхадцаў з Беларусі “Руска-беларускае братэрства-2000” падзяліліся, што з прыгажосцю беларускай культуры знаёмяць падчас сустрэч, творчых майстэрняў і майстар-класаў у бібліятэцы. Таксама тут пастаянна наладжваюцца тэлемасты з бібліятэкамі Беларусі. Так, толькі з брэсцкай бібліятэкай імя Аляксандра Пушкіна ў год праводзіцца больш дзесяці тэлемастоў!

Беларусы пражываюць і ў Рэспубліцы Башкартастан. На стажыроўцы яны прадстаўлялі вёску Ігліно і горад Стэрлітамак. Адна ж з самых знакамітых беларускіх вёсак у Башкартастане – Балтыка, тут нават пабудова дамоў розніцца, мясцовыя беларусы пастараліся ўсё зрабіць, як было на радзіме. А зусім нядаўна тут з’явіўся новы этнаграфічны цэнтр. Гэта хата-зруб, дзе паліцца печ, соліцца капуста, дзе гукаюць вясну і праводзяць іншыя святы. Беларусы замежжа расказалі, што ім даводзіцца праяўляць сябе з розных бакоў – прадстаўнікі харэаграфічнага калектыву ўмеюць ткаць і вышываць. Мясцовыя беларусы лічуць, што ім неабходна годна прадстаўляць Беларусь, а стажыроўкі якраз дапамагаюць угэтым, бо веды, атрыманыя ад майстроў і носьбітаў, немагчыма ўзяць з інтэрнэту.

Вольга Чупрына, якая прыехала з Таліна, нарадзілася ў Брэсцкай вобласці, але большую частку жыцця правяла ў Эстоніі. І тым не менш штогод яна прыязджае на малую радзіму ў вёску Жарабковічы. Жанчына вышывае крыжыкам і бісерам, займаецца пляценнем і алмазнай мазаікай, спявае ў беларускім ансамблі “Вянок” і ў акадэмічным хоры, кіруе літаратурным клубам “Гармонія” і сама піша вершы.

Упершыню творчую стажыроўку праходзіла Ірына Еўтухова з Эстоніі: “Я з Гомеля, працавала выкладчыкам у Гомельскім дзяржаўным універсітэце імя Францыска Скарыны. Волей лёсу аказалася ў Нарве. Веды, набытыя на стажыроўцы, вельмі спатрэбіцца для правядзення майстар-класаў у Эстоніі. Я шмат малюю, ужо было каля 30 выставак. У планах – зрабіць выстаўку “Мост сяброўства.

Беларусь – Эстонія”, бо ў нас столькі ўсяго, што аб’ядноўвае: найперш гэта прырода, буслы, а блакітная валонка з’яўляецца адным з сімвалаў для абедзвюх краін”.

Старшыня Беларускага культурнага цэнтра “Світанак” у Ташкенце Галіна Татаранка, расказала, што ва Узбекістане беларусаў заўсёды цёпла прымаюць, шмат хто з прадстаўнікоў старэйшага пакалення прызнаюцца, што бывалі ў блакітнавокай краіне, некаторыя мужчыны ў савецкі час праходзілі тут воінскую службу. Магчыма, гэта любоў да беларусаў навеяна і нацыянальнымі песнямі, якія так любяць нашы суайчыннікі з Узбекістана. Нездарма кажуць: хочаш пазнаць душу чалавека – паслухай, як ён спявае. На 30-годдзе “Світанка” быў зроблены



■ Раніца знаёмства ў Рэспубліканскім цэнтры нацыянальных культур



■ Майстар-клас па вырабе паясоў у Мінскім абласным цэнтры народнай творчасці

спектакль “Размова ў Малых Аўцюках”, падчас яго гледачы і смяліся, і плакалі, прызнаваліся, адчуванне было такое, што быццам яны патрапілі ў беларускую глыбінку.

ДНК НЕ СЦЕРЦІ

Упершыню ўсе ўдзельнікі творчай стажыроўкі (а гэта тры дзясяткі чалавек) далучыліся да прэс-канферэнцыі ў Нацыянальным прэс-цэнтры.

Адно з пытанняў, якое ім задалі журналісты, датычылася таго, як беларусаў успрымаюць у краінах пражывання і ці не дразняць, напрыклад, “бульбашамі”.

Алена Аўчарэнка – кіраўнік рэгіянальнай культурнай аўтаноміі беларусаў Омскай вобласці “Буслы

(Аисты)” расказала, што калі выбіралі назву для аб’яднання, прадстаўлялі, што без жартаў не абыдзецца. Але ў той час яна пачула ў адміністрацыі: “Аист на крыше – мир на земле”. Пасля аказалася, што грамадскае аб’яднанне беларусаў вельмі палюбілі мясцовыя жыхары. Калі дзеці ў нацыянальных строях удзельнічаюць у мерапрыемствах, іх радасна сустракаюць: “Гэта нашы буслікі!” Наогул у Омскай вобласці пражывае каля 123 нацыянальнасцяў. У Сібіры асядалі прадстаўнікі розных народаў, якія ехалі па Сталыпінскай рэформе, былі задзейнічаны ў будаўніцтве БАМа, служылі тут ці прыбывалі па размеркаванні ў якасці маладых спецыялістаў.

Алена Аўчарэнка расказала, што калі толькі стала членам аўтаноміі ў 1997 годзе, тут было ўсяго

5 чалавек. Сёння толькі актывістаў, якія пастаянна задзейнічаны ў рабоце, – 250. Арганізацыя мае вялікія філіялы ў Тары і Тэўрызе. Жанчына падзякавала Міністэрству культуры і іншым арганізацыям Беларусі за падтрымку, якую яна адчувае ў сваёй працы. Нацыянальныя строі, перададзеныя суайчыннікам з Беларусі, – не проста вопратка для мерапрыемстваў. На Омшчыне кажуць, што яны робяць жанчын вельмі прыгожымі. “Буслы” самі шыюць строі, перадаюць іх дзецям у мясцовым каледжы культуры, дзе створаны фальклорны ансамбль “Славянскі вянок”. Яшчэ 20 гадоў таму кіраўнікі музычных школ ездзілі па вёсках і вывучалі спевы. Яны заўважыл, адметную рысу беларусаў – так, як яны, больш ніхто не спяваў. Гэтыя гарлавыя спевы і сёння можна пачуць ад маленькіх артыстаў. Ёсць надзея, што традыцыя будзе перадавацца і далей. У Омскай вобласці створаны тры музейныя пакоі, дзе захоўваюцца рэчы перасяленцаў. Праз пакаленні перадаюцца песні і казкі. А мясцовыя сказіцелі вучаць дзяцей свайму майстэрству. “Дзе б мы не жылі, у нас адно ДНК. І яго нічым не сцерці”, – упэўнена Алена Аўчарэнка.

Загадчык сектара па справах нацыянальнасцяў апарата Упаўнаважанага па справах рэлігій і нацыянальнасцяў Алена Бязручка заўважыла, што



■ Залатыя заняткі ў Беларускім дзяржаўным педагагічным універсітэце



■ Беларусы замежжа знаёмяцца з майстрамі

сустрэчы з суайчыннікамі ўзбагачаюць абодва бакі. Прастаўнікі беларускай дыяспары – частыя госці ў апарце. Яны дзяляцца сваімі напрацоўкамі, раска-зваюць пра мерапрыемствы, якія праводзяць у краінах пражывання па папулярнасці беларускай культуры і традыцый.

Апаратам Упаўнаважанага пастаянна аказваецца магчыма метадычная арганізацыйная ды іншая падтрымка. З радасцю тут адгукваюцца на запрашэнні суайчыннікаў прыняць удзел у мерапрыемствах, якія праводзяць беларусы замежжа: відэа-канферэнцыях, конкурсах, тэматычных сустрэчах. “Мы з цікавасцю сачылі за мерапрыемствамі, прысвечанымі 135-годдзю Марка Шагала ў Эстоніі, 140-гадоваму юбілею Янкі Маўра ў Латвіі, памяці прападобнай Ефрасінні Полацкай у Казахстане, захапляліся работамі дзяцей з розных краін свету па сюжэтах беларускіх казак у рамках міжнароднага конкурсу дзіцячага малюнка “З рога ўсяго многа”, арганізаванага аб’яднаннем беларусаў Іарданіі ды іншымі”, – заўважыла Алена Бязручка. У рамках дзяржаўнай праграмы “Культура Беларусі” апарат Упаўнаважанага мае магчымасць бясплатнаа перадаваць нацыя-

і папулярнасцю мерапрыемстваў, накіраваных на ўстанаўленне і развіццё новых кантактаў. Беларусы замежжа далучаліся да такіх фестываляў, як “Браслаўскія зарніцы”, “Звіняць цымбалы і гармонік”, “Вішнёвы фестываль” і многіх іншых.

НЕ ПРАДАЕЦЦА ХАТА БАЦЬКОЎ

Стажыроўка сабрала людзей, якіх аб’яднала не толькі любоў да Беларусі, але і агульныя справы. І тут варта ўзгадаць не толькі пра сучасныя праекты, але і пра сямейныя традыцыі. Шмат робіцца для захавання спадчыны, таго, што было перанята ад бацькоў і дзядоў, якія нарадзіліся ў Беларусі. Безумоўна, сабраная суайчыннікамі інфармацыя яшчэ патрабуе вывучэння.



■ Ларыса Касіцкая (злева) знаёміла беларусаў замежжа з тэхнікай роспісу велікодных яек



нальныя строі, галаўныя ўборы, кнігі і сувенірную прадукцыю для суайчыннікаў. У 2023 годзе ў адпаведнасці з заяўкамі Упаўнаважаным былі перададзены нацыянальныя строі і іншыя матэрыяльныя каштоўнасці для арганізацый беларусаў Іарданіі, Арменіі, Малдовы і Казахстана. У гэтым годзе ў адпаведнасці з заяўкамі строі будуць уручаны нашым суайчыннікам з Узбекістана і Латвіі.

Апаратам Упаўнаважанага штогод праводзіцца праект “Адміністрацыйны рэгіён Беларусі – арганізацыя суайчыннікаў за мяжой”. Ён накіраваны на садзейнічэнне ўстанаўленню канструктыўнага ўзаемавыгаднага супрацоўніцтва рэгіёнаў Беларусі з суайчыннікамі і іх арганізацыямі ў іншых краінах, мае на мэце падтрымку

Магчыма, далёка за межамі Бацькаўшчыны ім удалося захаваць тое, што страчана ў нас.

Беларусы замежжа беражліва захоўваюць старыя сямейныя рэліквіі, не толькі таму, што кожная рэч – памяць аб радзіме і кавалак гісторыі канкрэтнага роду. Гэта яшчэ і своеасаблівы ланцужок з мінулым, дапаможнік для нашчадкаў. Сёння людзі заканчваюць вышэйшыя навучальныя ўстановы, каб навучыцца рабіць тое, што ў нашых продкаў перадавалася ў сям’і. Так, людзі ведалі, як вырасціць лён, апрацаваць, выткаць, выбеліць, вышыць. “Мая бабуля перадала маці тое, што рабіла яшчэ яе маці. Бабулю звалі Ульянай, таму і песню “Ох, і сеяла Ульяніца лянок” я ведала з чатырох гадоў, – падзялілася Таісія Бачкарова – старшыня Латвійскага таварыства беларускай культуры “Вытокі”, якое дзейнічае ў Рызе. – У мяне дома ёсць падузорнікі, ручнікі, што віселі на абразях. Ім можа і пад дзвесце гадоў”. Жанчына прызналася, што ў Бабруйску ў яе ёсць кватэра, якую яна нікому не прадасць. Як і



■ Майстар-клас па ўпрыгожванні велікодных вербаў

ніколі не прамыяе беларускую мову на якую іншую. Яе продкі родам з Мінскай вобласці – Клецкага і Нясвіжскага раёнаў. Там не трэба было вучыць родную мову па падручніках, бо яна з дзяцінства чула, як усе навокал на ёй размаўлялі.

Таісія Бачкарова падчас стажыроўкі праніклёна чытала беларускія вершы. Яна заўважыла, што для яе кожнае роднае слова гучыць як песня. У таварыстве “Вытокі”, якому ўжо споўнілася 15 гадоў, і ў аднайменным гурце працуюць над кожным словам, дзе б яно не прагучала: у вершы, песні, сцэнарыі. Жанчына заўважыла, што менавіта мова ў Латвіі выступае галоўным ідэнтыфікатарам беларусаў. Аб’яднанне ўдзельнічае ў мерапрыемствах, якія праводзяць гарадскія ўлады і ў святах, дзе задзейнічаны суполкі іншых народаў. Сваю любоў да радзімы жанчына перадала ўнуку. З малых гадоў ён ведае беларускія песні. Калі яго клалі спаць, заўсёды прасіў бабулю заспяваць “Ой, сівы конь бяжыць”. Праз песні і вершы хлопчык разумеў, хто ён, якія ў яго карані.

ЗАХАПЛЯЛЬНЫ СВЕТ РАМЁСТАВАЎ

Праграма стажыроўкі як заўсёды была вельмі насычанай. У рамках яе прайшла дыялогавая пляцоўка з міністрам культуры, адбыліся экскурсіі, суайчыннікі ўсклалі кветкі да мемарыяльнага комплексу Хатынь. Мінскі абласны цэнтр народнай творчасці падрыхтаваў вясеннія майстар-класы. Разам з майстрамі госці распісвалі велікодныя яйкі, упрыгожвалі галінкі вярбы сушанымі кветкамі, рабілі набіванкі і паясы, працавалі з лазой. Творчыя заняткі прайшлі ва ўстановах культуры і адукацыі не толькі Мінска, але і рэгіёнаў. Першым такім па-засталічным пунктам творчасці стаў Маладзечна.

Ларыса Ступіна – дырэктар Маладзечанскага раённага цэнтра рамёстваў, расказала, што 25 гадоў, як працуе ўстанова, тут па крупінках аднаўляюць і

развіваюць традыцыйныя рамёствы. Пра тое, што такія ўменні продкаў запатрабаваныя і ў наш час, гавораць цікавасць дзяцей, якія прыходзяць сюды займацца, і візіты шматлікіх дэлегацый. Асабліва тут рады прымаць аднадумцаў, абменьвацца вопытам. Для кожнага майстра сустрэча з людзьмі, якія захапляюцца тым, што яны робяць, – вялікі стымул для далейшай працы. Акрамя таго, такія сустрэчы натхняюць на новыя праекты, ідэі.

У Маладзечанскім цэнтры рамёстваў у рамках стажыроўкі прайшлі майстар-класы па вырабе салямяных павукоў, выцінанцы,

інкрустацыі саломкай, вырабе лялек, салямяных скульптур і “казубаў” (салямяных ёмістасцяў), стварэнні сувеніраў з прыродных матэрыялаў, разьбе па дрэве, вышыўцы. Беларусы замежжа Ларыса Ступіна запрасіла наведаць Маладзечна яшчэ – штогод тут праходзіць фестываль беларускай песні і паэзіі, падчас якога працуе і “горад майстроў”, куды прыязджаюць рамеснікі з розных куткоў свету. Нашы суайчыннікі сюды могуць патрапіць не толькі як наведвальнікі, але і як удзельнікі, якія прадставяць уласныя вырабы. Вельмі насычаную праграму для ўдзельнікаў стажыроўкі падрыхтавалі ў Докшыцах. А ў апошні дзень стажыроўкі беларусы замежжа ператварыліся ў “студэнтаў” факультэта эстэтычнай адукацыі Беларускага дзяржаўнага педагагічнага ўніверсітэта. Тут працавала выстаўка творчых работ студэнтаў і выкладчыкаў, гасцям расказвалі пра народныя строі, кераміку, вучылі рабіць салямяных птушак, лялек-абярэгаў. Расказвалі, як па-рознаму могуць гучаць цымбалы, а сучасныя музыканты заўважылі нават, што такі інструмент пры пэўным падыходзе можа выдаваць гукі як гавайская гітара. Нават ад таго, як майстар трымае малаточкі, якімі ўдарае па струнах, гук мяняецца. Так, калі граць вішнёвай палачкай, абшытай скурай, – ён атрымліваецца больш мяккі. А ў старыя часы, калі музыкі былі жаданымі гасцямі на вяселлях, яны выкарыстоўвалі драўляныя малаточкі і тады інструмент звінеў так, што яго далёка было чуваць... Канцэртную праграму падрыхтаваў Народны ансамбль беларускай музыкі і песні “Ярыца”, які створаны пры БДПУ. Гэты калектыў пабываў на міжнародных конкурсах і фестывалях: у Францыі, Італі, Германіі, Латвіі, Чэхіі, Польшчы, Літве, Сербіі. Падчас сустрэчы абмяркоўваліся прапановы аб гастролях “Ярыцы” па мясцінах, у якіх пражываюць нашы суайчыннікі.

Алена **Дзядзюля**
Фота аўтара

ШЧЫРЫЯ СЛОВЫ МАЙСТРА



**САЮЗ БЕЛАРУСКІХ ЯЎРЭЙСКІХ АБ'ЯДНАННЯЎ І АБШЧЫН ПРАВЁЎ ВЕЧАР ПАМЯЦІ,
ПРЫСВЕЧАНЫ ЗАСЛУЖАНАМУ АРХІТЭКТАРУ БЕЛАРУСІ ЛЕАНІДУ ЛЕВІНУ.
УЗГАДАЦЬ ПРА ТОЕ, ЯКІ ЁНЁСАК ПАКІНУЎ МАЙСТАР, ПРЫЙШЛІ ДЫПЛАМАТЫ,
ПРАДСТАЎНІКІ ГРАМАДСКІХ, РЭЛІГІЙНЫХ І АДУКАЦЫЙНЫХ АРГАНІЗАЦЫЙ.**

Сярод аб'ектаў, над якімі працаваў Леанід Левін, – мемарыяльныя комплексы “Хатынь”, “Шунеўка”, “Прапыў”, помнікі “Кацюшы” ў Оршы і экіпажу Мікалая Гастэлы. За мемарыял “Дзецям – ахвярам Вялікай Айчыннай вайны” ў Красным беразе ў 2011 годзе архітэктар адзначаны Дзяржаўнай прэміяй Рэспублікі Беларусь. Напачатку стварэнне такога праекта здаваўся нерэальным, не было ні заказу на падобны комплекс, ні сродкаў. Падчас знаёмства з мясцінамі, дзе знаходзіліся дзіцячыя канцлагеры, Левін вырашыў узводзіць новы аб'ект памяці менавіта ў Красным беразе. Ён прадставіў, як комплекс можа ўпісацца ў яблыневы сад.

АРХІТЭКТУРА ЯК ПАСЛАННЕ

У творчасці Левіна рэльеф і тое, якая памяць захоўваецца ў пэўным кутку, адыгрывалі значную ролю. Так было з “Хатынню”, у якой паказаны падмуркі спаленых хат. У Гарадзеі, дзе было знішчана ўсё мясцовае яўрэйскае насельніцтва, памяць пра яго майстар вырашыў захаваць асобым чынам – быццам людзі ператварыліся ў камяні. Па задуме архітэктара камяні павінны былі ляжаць на шляху да месца расстрэлу. Патрэбна іх было 1137 – роўна па колькасці ахвяр. Здавалася, такую ідэю цяжка будзе рэалізаваць, але адгукнуліся мясцовыя жыхары – камяні розных памераў яны прывозілі сюды на калёсах ды тачках.

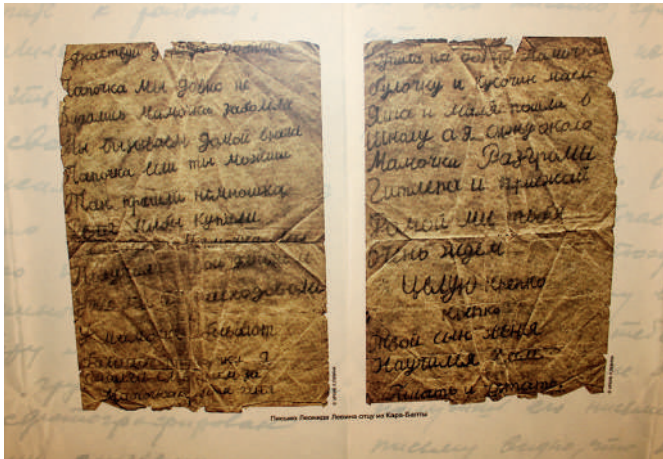
Ёсць свая сімволіка і ў мемарыяла ў Красным беразе, які ў народзе ўжо прызвалі “дзіцячай Хатынню” – гэта

адзіны ў краіне клас, які ніколі першага верасня не запаўняецца дзецьмі. Сваю гісторыю перадае і плошча сонца з вітражамі, у аснову якіх ляглі малюнкi, зробленыя дзецьмі ў 1945–1947 гадах. Так архітэктар, чыё маленства таксама выпала на ваенныя гады, паказаў мары пра шчасце малых, у якіх у гады вайны дарослыя скралі дзяцінства.

“Ніколі ў нашых работах не было гэтага гвалту чалавека над чалавекам, не было аўтаматаў, крыкаў, шынялёў”, – прызнаваўся Левін. Для кожнага кутка памяці ён знаходзіў свае сімвалы, дэталі, расповед. Заўсёды ён імкнуўся данесці пасланне нашчадкам, што падобнага не павінна паўтарыцца.

У савецкі час не ўсе гатовы былі прыняць настолькі шчымыя, дакументальныя расповеды пра ваенныя падзеі. Так, першая рэакцыя тагачаснага міністра культуры СССР Фурцавай на мемарыяльны комплекс Хатынь была негатыўнай, яна нават казалася, што ўсё трэба прыбраць бульдозерам. І тым не менш у тыя часы вялікая колькасць людзей змагла прачытаць пасылы, пакінутыя архітэктарамі і скульптарамі. Комплекс “Хатынь” быў адзначаны Ленінскай прэміяй за архітэктур, а сам мемарыял сапраўды стаў народным – сюды не толькі везлі на аўтобусах піянераў і турыстаў, у Хатынь пацягнуліся простыя людзі. Яны раскладалі свае торбачкі каля фундаменту ў спаленых хат, паміналі ахвяр вайны.

Адным з першых Левін узяў тэму Халакосту, прычым у тыя часы, калі на нашай зямлі яшчэ саромеліся гэтага слова, і яўрэі нават баяліся гаварыць



■ Ліст Лёні Левіна да бацькі

пра сваю нацыянальнасць. Дзякуючы Леаніду Левіну ўзведзены помнікі ахвярам Халакосту ў Гарадзі, Давід-Гарадку, Слуцку. Адна з самых вядомых яго работ па гэтай тэматыцы – мемарыяльны комплекс на месцы знішчэння вязняў Мінскага гета “Яма”. Сюды ўзгадаць пра тысячы абарваных у гады вайны жыццяў штогод прыходзіць вялікая колькасць людзей. Кветкі ўскладаюць прадстаўнікі ўлады, а кіраўнікі розных канфесій моляцца аб захаванні міру на зямлі.

Менавіта Леанід Левін пачынаў працаваць над праектам мемарыяла ў Трасцянец – чацвёртым у свеце па колькасці ахвяр месцы знішчэння

■ Выстава “Вайна і каханне”



мірных жыхароў у гады вайны, і самым вялікім на тэрыторыі Савецкага Саюза. Тут разам з мясцовымі жыхарамі былі забіты яўрэі, прывезеныя з тэрыторыі Заходняй Еўропы. “Мы павінны быць людзьмі, якія памятаюць аб тых, хто загінуў, аб тых, хто знайшоў апошні прытулак на нашай зямлі”, – казаў архітэктар.

Сваім выступленнем падчас Міжнароднай канферэнцыі пра лёс нацысцкага золата ў Вашынгтоне ў 1998 годзе, дзе Левін спытаўся: “Колькі каштуюць 800 тысяч забітых яўрэяў Беларусі?”, ён паказаў, што Беларусь варта ўключэння ў спіс краін, якія прэтэндавалі на размеркаванне нарабаваных захопнікамі багаццяў. Леанід Левін падкрэсліваў, што

трагедыю беларускіх яўрэяў у гады вайны, ён не аддзяляе ад трагедыі беларускага народа.

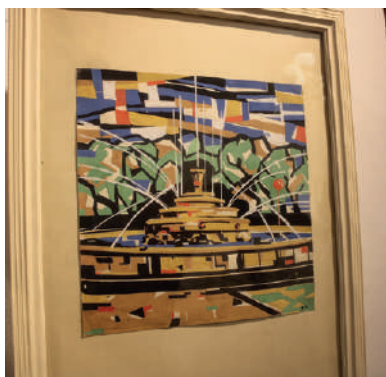
Архітэктар быў адзначаны і з боку Федэратыўнай рэспублікі Германія. Ён дзяліўся з нямецкімі калегамі сваім бачаннем вайны, садзейнічаў наладжванню кантактаў, тым самым зрабіў унёсак у справу прымірэння і ўзаемаразумення паміж народамі Беларусі і Германіі. У 2008 годзе Левіну ўручаны ордэн за заслугі перад Германіяй у знак прызнання таго, што ён зрабіў для міжкультурнага дыялогу. Архітэктар быў упэўнены, што агульная культура памяці нараджаецца праз сумесныя перажыванні і развіццё агульных каштоўнасцяў.

АДНАЎЛЕННЕ АБШЧЫНЫ

Прайшло дзесяць гадоў, як майстра ўжо няма, а распачатыя ім праекты і справы працягваюць развівацца. З 2003 года ў Беларусі працуе камісія па ўвекавечанні ахвяр Халакосту. Ужо пастаўлена больш сотні мемарыяльных знакаў на месцы знішчэння яўрэяў і праца ў гэтым кірунку працягваецца. Майстар выступіў і адным са стваральнікаў гістарычнай майстэрні, якая сёння носіць імя заслужанага архітэктара і збірае матэрыялы аб чалавечых пакутах у гады вайны.

Менавіта Леанід Левін стаў першым старшынёй Саюза беларускіх яўрэйскіх грамадскіх аб'яднанняў і абшчын, які ўзначальваў з 1991 па 2014 гады. Пасля

экспазіцыю, прысвечаную жыццю і творчасці заслужанага архітэктара, ды наогул таму часу, у якім ён жыў. Яна ўзгадала, як бацька, калі ехаў у Ізраіль на аперацыю на сэрцы, пакінуў два стосы папер. Адзін – завяшчанне, калі раптам яго не стане, другі – спіс спраў, якія трэба зрабіць, у тым ліку і тых, што датычыліся яўрэйскай абшчыны. Калі ён вярнуўся пасля ўдалай аперацыі, з гонарам расказваў, што ён адзіны яўрэй Беларусі, сэрца якога бачыла неба Іерусаліма. Сам Левін адраджэнне ў Беларусі яўрэйскай абшчыны лічыў чудам. Ствараліся розныя арганізацыі, выдавалася газета, праходзілі выстаўкі яўрэйскіх мастакоў, фестывалі, запрацавалі школы і дзіцячыя садкі. У 1999 годзе ад імя яўрэйскай



■ Экспазіцыя "Зямля Леаніда Левіна"

Вялікай Айчыннай вайны, падчас якой у Беларусі былі знішчаны сотні тысяч яўрэяў, здавалася аднавіць ранейшыя сувязі немагчыма.

Дачка Леаніда Левіна – Галіна, якая таксама працуе архітэктарам і працягвае справу бацькі, з'яўляецца старшынёй рэспубліканскага фонда "Халакост". Яна захоўвае і папулярызуе спадчыну бацькі, багатыя дакументальныя архівы, эскізы, рэчы Леаніда Мендэлевіча, якіх хопіць на тое, каб зрабіць не адну

абшчыну Леанід Левін падпісаў дамову аб супрацоўніцтве з кіраўнікамі цэнтралізаваных яўрэйскіх арганізацый краін СНД, уклаў шмат намаганняў, каб у Мінску пачалося будаўніцтва синагогі.

Як узгадаў галоўны равін Рыгор Абрамовіч, нягледзячы на тое, у якіх значных і маштабных праектах Ланід Мендэлевіч быў задзейнічаны, у жыцці і рабоце ён быў вельмі сціплым чалавекам: "Ён ніколі не кічыўся і не хваліўся сваімі заслугамі. У зносінах з

любым суразмоўцам быў ветлівы і ўважлівы. Для яго галоўным было выканаць сваю задачу як мага лепш, таму, калі ён выслухоўваў ідэі і парады калег, заўсёды быў удзячны”. Неяк Рыгор Абрамовіч, калі збіраўся пісаць артыкул для рэспубліканскай газеты, пачуў ад Левіна парад: “Чытач павінен пазнаваць, захапляцца не толькі аўтарам, але і матэрыялам!” Спадчына, якую пакінуў архітэктар, – прамое сведчанне яго слоў. Сваімі творамі ён імкнуўся не толькі захаваць памяць пра трагедыю ў гады вайны, але і прасоўваць гуманістычныя ідэалы. Яго творчасці ўласцівы ўвага да лёсаў людзей, спачуванне, суперажыванне. За простымі і зразумелымі вобразамі адчуваецца глыбіня. Так праз архітэктур

не толькі лісты і паштоўкі сужэнцаў, але і малюнкi іх маленькага сына Лёні і яго лісты, у тым ліку і той, дзе хлопчык паведамляў бацьку, што навучыўся чытаць і пісаць.

ЗЯМЛЯ ЛЕВІНА

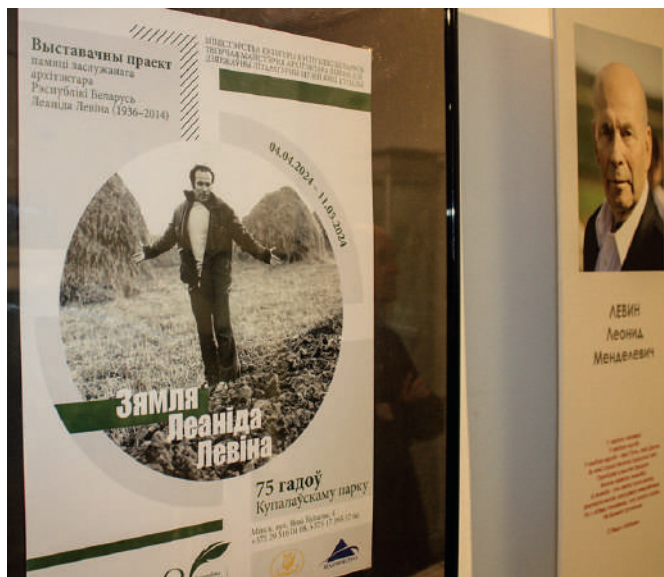
Яшчэ адна выстаўка “Зямля Леаніда Левіна”, прысвечаная архітэктару, працуе ў Дзяржаўным літаратурным музеі Янкі Купалы. Яна знаёміць з іншым бокам творчасці майстра, не звязаным з адлюстраваннем чалавечых пакут у гады вайны. У суаўтарстве з архітэктарамі і скульптарамі Левін працаваў над пераўтварэннем аблічча парка Янкі Купалы і плошчы Якуба Коласа, рэканструкцыяй гістарычнага цэнтра Мінска – Траецкага прадмесця і Верхняга горада, будынкамі МЗС, ВДНХ, кінатэатра “Піянер”, консульства ФРГ у Мінску, станцыі метро “Плошча Незалежнасці” і многімі іншымі.

Новая выстаўка звязана таксама з 75-годдзем сталічнага парка, які носіць імя Янкі Купалы. Калі адзначалася 90-годдзе народнага паэта, было прынята рашэнне стварыць мемарыяльны комплекс, прысвечаны пісьменніку. У парку не толькі з’явіўся помнік Песняру, фантан “Вянок”, які нагадваў і пра купальскія традыцыі, і пра тое, што дзень нараджэння Купалы прыпадае на гэта свята. Нават лаўкі, ліхтары і клумбы рабіліся ў адзіным комплексе. Архітэктары шукалі сімвалы, якія б паказвалі і творчасць Купалы, і культуру Беларусі наогул. Новая экспазіцыя дапаможа больш даведацца пра тое, як працавала каманда архітэктараў і скульптараў над гэтай задачай. На выстаўцы пададзены фатаграфіі з фондаў музея і асабістых сямейных архіваў Левіных,

інструменты, якімі карыстаўся архітэктар, яго вопратка, малюнкi, кнігі з дарчымі надпісамі. Многія з прадстаўленых на выстаўцы прадметаў паказваюць, з якой колькасцю людзей працаваў і сябраваў архітэктар – сярод іх не толькі яго калегі, але і пісьменнікі, кампазітары. Часам Леанід Левін звяртаўся па дапамогу літаратараў, вершаваных радкі размяшчаліся на яго работах.

Працы Левіна – гэта не проста аб’екты, прысвечаныя пэўным асобам і гістарычным падзеям, яны вучаць разважаць, спалучаць розныя віды творчасці. Як адзначыў на адкрыцці выстаўкі скульптар, член Беларускага саюза мастакоў, лаўрэат міжнародных конкурсаў графікі і скульптуры, Аляксандр Шапо, які разам з Леанідам Левіным працаваў над манументамі ў Бабруйску і ў Благаўшчыне, толькі дзякуючы Леаніду Мендэлевічу ён даведаўся, што такое паэтычнае гучанне мемарыяла.

Таццяна Бузіноўская
Фота Алены Дзязюлі



ён раскрываў сваю душу, тое, як востра ўспрымаў боль людзей, чые мары, планы, жыцці былі перарваны вайной.

Падчас вечара памяці, які прайшоў у Мінскім адукацыйным цэнтры імя Ёханеса Раў, Галіна Левіна пазнаёміла гасцей з фотаэкспазіцыяй, прысвечанай творчасці майстра, дзе побач з фатаграфіямі мемарыялаў, над якімі ён працаваў, размешчаны дакументальныя здымкі і цытаты самога архітэктара ў дачыненні да канкрэтных гістарычных тэм і помнікаў. Таксама на сустрэчы была прадстаўлена выстаўка “Вайна і каханне”, для стварэння якой былі задзейнічаны сямейныя архівы, фатаграфіі бацькоў архітэктара, лісты. У іх гісторыя вайны падаецца праз пачуцці разлучаных каханых, клопат аднаго аб адным і аб дзецях, цяжкасці, з якімі яны сутыкнуліся, мары аб шчаслівым жыцці. Бацька Леаніда Левіна пісаў з фронту, а маці – з эвакуацыі, дзе аказалася адна з двума дзецьмі на руках. Яна цяжка захварэла і не перажыла вайну. У экспазіцыі прадстаўлены

ЖЫЦЦЁ ЯК ЖМЕНЯ СОНЕЧНЫХ ПРОМНЯЎ

“Дарогі, сустрэчы, уражанні. І вечны спадарожнік літаратара, памочнік яго памяці – блакнот”, – пісаў Янка Брыль. Сваё захапленне светам, людзьмі, уласныя назіранні, развагі, уражанні ён перадаў у лірычных нататках, якія выйшлі кнігай “Жменя сонечных промняў”. Менавіта гэту назву супрацоўнікі Дзяржаўнага музея гісторыі беларускай літаратуры ўзялі ў якасці назвы аднаго з галоўных праектаў гэтага года.

Выстаўка “Жменя сонечных промняў” прысвечана пісьменнікам, чый юбілей прыпадае на 2024 год. Выстава прадставіць творчасць сямі выдатных аўтараў. Старэйшы з іх – Міхась Лынькоў нарадзіўся 125 гадоў таму. Лёс падрыхтаваў для яго шэраг выпрабаванняў. Ён быў сведкам рэвалюцыйных падзей. У гады Першай сусветнай вайны памёр яго бацька, хутка не стала і маці. Маладому хлопцу давялося даглядаць двух малодшых братоў і сястру. У 1941 годзе фашысты расстралялі яго першую жонку (яўрэйку па нацыянальнасці) і сына. Пасля вайны ўжо з новай спадарожніцай

жыцця ён удачыраў дзвюх дзяўчынак... Выстаўка дапамагае больш даведацца пра пісьменніка – на ёй прадстаўлены яго рукапіс рамана “Векапомныя дні”, работа над якім, як прызнаваўся аўтар, давалася яму вельмі цяжка. Тут можна пабачыць і рэчы, якія належалі Лынькову: гадзіннік, партсігар, запанкі і кашулю, прывезеную са Злучаных Штатаў, магчыма, тады, калі пісьменнік удзельнічаў у сесіі Генеральнай Асамблеіі ААН у Нью-Ёрку. Прадстаўлены таксама ілюстрацыі да знакамітых твораў Міхасы Лынькова. Гэты аўтар быў адзначаны рознымі літаратурнымі прэміямі, пэўны час





узначальваў Саюз пісьменнікаў БССР, быў акадэмікам і дырэктарам Інстытута літаратуры, мовы і мастацтваў АН БССР.

Пры афармленні часовай літаратурна-дакументальнай выстаўкі выкарыстаны вобраз сонца. Яго прамяні сімвалізуюць жыццё пісьменнікаў – яскравае, напоўненае знаёмствамі, сустрэчамі, творчасцю. Як заўважыў падчас адкрыцця экспазіцыі дырэктар Дзяржаўнага музея гісторыі беларускай літаратуры Сяргей Усік, рэчы для яе адабраны з багатых фондаў музея. Многія з іх раней ніколі не выстаўляліся. Тут можна пабачыць фотаздымкі, экслібрысы, кнігі з аўтографамі, аўтабіяграфіі, лісты, рукапісы, дакументы.

Прадметы, арганізатарамі падбіраліся так, каб паказаць жыццё літаратараў, іх захапленні, справы, мары. Так, Аркадзь Куляшоў быў аматарам шахмат. Пасля вайны ён нават узначаліў камітэт, які займаўся папулярызацыяй гэтага віду спорта.

Яшчэ адзін стагадовы юбіляр гэтага года – Артур Вольскі – марыў стаць мастаком, нават паступіў у Віцебскае мастацкае вучылішча. Літаратурныя ж здольнасці яму, відаць, перадаліся ад бацькі, які быў вядомым пісьменнікам і драматургам, аўтарам п'ес “Цудоўная дудка” і “Несцерка” (па апошняй быў зняты аднайменны фільм па сцэнарыю аўтара). Вайна пераблытала планы Артура Вольскага, ён быў

прызваны ў войска, служыў на Далёкім Усходзе, удзельнічаў у баях супраць Японіі. І усё ж менавіта са словам была звязана яго творчая кар'ера. Ён працаваў у газеце “Чырвоная змена”, быў адказным сакратаром часопіса “Бярозка”, адным з тых, хто стварыў часопіс “Вясёлка”, працаваў дырэктарам Тэатра юнага гледача, загадваў Домам літаратараў. Пісаў для дзяцей і дарослых.

Адным з аўтараў, чыё імя звязана з развіццём беларускай дзіцячай літаратуры, з'яўляецца Алесь Якімовіч. Як многія пісьменнікі таго часу ён меў педагагічную адукацыю. Таму ён не толькі пісаў творы для дзяцей, але стаў і адным з укладальнікаў “Чытанкі” для вучняў другіх класаў, апрацоўваў беларускія казкі (можна ўгадаць зборнікі “Каток – залаты лабок” і “Бацькаў дар”). А яшчэ Алесь Якімовіч працаваў перакладчыкам. На беларускай мове дзякуючы яму можна пачытаць творы Пушкіна, Крылова, Маршака, Андрэяна, Братоў Грым ды іншых. Алесь Якімовіч нарадзіўся ва Уздзенскім раёне. У экспазіцыі прадстаўлена фота, дзе ён побач са сваім земляком – Кандратам Крапівой.

Ручка з партрэтам Ясеніна на вітрынах, прысвечаных Максіму Лужаніну – напамін пра тое, што ў свой час гэтага пісьменніка параўноўвалі з Ясеніным і Багдановічам. Большасць юбіляраў, прадстаўленых на часовай экспазіцыі, былі звязаны з літаратурным

аб'яднаннем “Маладняк”. Максім Лужанін быў адным з першых яго членаў.

Стужка ганаровага грамадзяніна Полацка, якая належала Алесю Савіцкаму, сведчыць пра тое, як шмат увагі ў сваёй дзейнасці пісьменнік надаваў малой радзіме. Кожны раз, калі ён прыязджаў у родны горад, заходзіў у сваю школу і музеі, дарыў кнігі. На выстаўцы прадстаўлена і падзяка ад часопіса “Маладосць”, якому пісьменнік аддаў шмат гадоў. У гады Вялікай Айчыннай вайны Савіцкі ваяваў у партызанскім атрадзе, там было напісана яго першае апавяданне. Пасля вызвалення Беларусі разам з Чырвонай Арміяй дайшоў да Берліна. Пасля перамогі вярнуўся ў Полацк, працаваў у абласной

газеце. У бясконцых камандзіроўках збіраў інфармацыю пра тое, якія складанасці перадоўляе народ пасля вайны, як аднаўляецца гаспадарка.

Самы ж малады з юбіляраў, прадстаўленых на выстаўцы, – Іван Чыгрынаў. У снежні яму б магло споўніцца 90 гадоў. Дэпутацкае пасведчанне, выпелы, значкі, кнігі, сцэнарыі – усё гэта сведчыць пра насычанае жыццё пісьменніка. Сёння, калі актыўна развіваецца ўнутраны турызм, калі кожны раённы цэнтр мае свае брэндавыя мерапрыемствы, вядзецца рэканструкцыя раней закінутых сядзіб, прыгажюць малыя гарады, варта ўгадаць пра тое, што менавіта Іван Чыгрынаў, які ўзначальваў Беларускі фонд культуры, адным з першых выступаў





Мікалай Купава, Яўген Ціхановіч ды іншыя творцы. Іх работы прысвечаны знакамітым пісьменнікам і асветнікам розных часоў. Асабліва цікава паглядзець, як мастакі ўбачылі асоб, што жылі ў тых часы, калі яшчэ не было фатаграфій, і сведчанняў пра тое, як яны выглядалі, амаль не захавалася. Так, у экспазіцыі можна пабачыць партрэты Сімяона Полацкага, Кірылы Тураўскага, Францыска Скарыны, Міколы Гусоўскага.

Таксама мастакі прысвяцілі свае творы Францішку Багушэвічу, Адаму Міцкевічу, Цішку Гартнаму, Максіму Гарэцкаму, Сяргею Грахоўскаму, Рыгору Барадуліну, Васілю Быкаву, Уладзіміру Караткевічу, Івану Шамякіну ды

іншым літаратарам.

Таццяна **Бузінойская**

Фота Алены Дзядзюлі

за папулярызаванне беларускіх мястэчак і гарадкоў. Ён гаварыў пра неабходнасць рэстаўрацыі і аднаўлення, узняцця статусу невялікіх населеных пунктаў, іх раскруткі.

Напрацягу года выстаўка «Жменя сонечных промняў» будзе служыць прасторай для рэалізацыі розных праектаў, тэматычных сустрэч, лекцый, экскурсій.

Яшчэ адзін праект музея дазволіць паглыбіцца ў літаратурны свет дзякуючы творам мастацтва. Выстаўка «Беларусь – краіна талентаў. Беларускія пісьменнікі ў творчасці беларускіх мастакоў» будзе працаваць да 29 снежня.

У экспазіцыі прадстаўлены партрэты, скульптуры, бюсты, барельефы, над якімі працавалі Георгій Паплаўскі, Леанід Шчамялёў, Мікалай Гуціеў, Эдуард Агновіч,



МАО ЦЗЭДУН ПА-БЕЛАРУСКУ



Кітайскі камуністычны лідар Мао Цзэдун (1893–1976) пакінуў свой след і ў мастацкай, паэтычнай творчасці, у прыватнасці. Пра гэта ішла размова і на перамовах беларускіх кнігавыдаўцоў з кітайскімі калегамі. Дырэктар – галоўны рэдактар Выдавецкага дома “Звязда”, старшыня Саюза пісьменнікаў Беларусі Алесь Карлюкевіч на пляцоўцы XXXI Мінскай міжнароднай кніжнай выстаўкі-кірмашу правёў сустрэчу з дэлегацыяй пекінскага выдавецтва “Замежная літаратура”.

– Мы не ўпершыню абмяркоўваем з Выдавецкім домам “Звязда” кітайска-беларускія кнігавыдавецкія ініцыятывы, – зазначыла намеснік галоўнага рэдактара выдавецтва “Замежная літаратура” Дзін Чжыма. – Зараз мы хацелі б выйсці на рэалізацыю грунтоўнага праекта па выданні кнігі паэзіі заснавальніка КНР Мао Цзэдуна на беларускай і адначасова англійскай, кітайскай і рускай мовах. Мы ведаем, што вакол вашага выдавецтва групуецца добры актыў сучасных перакладчыкаў мастацкай літаратуры.

– Сапраўды, яшчэ ў 2012 годзе мы выдалі анталогію кітайскай паэзіі на беларускай мове “Пад крыламі дракона: сто паэтаў Кітая”. Пасля распрацавалі серыю паэтычных зборнікаў кітайскіх аўтараў – “Светлыя знакі: паэты Кітая”, – падкрэсліў Алесь Карлюкевіч... Вершы Мао Цзэдуна раней перакладалі на беларускую мову – і ў 1950-я гады, і ўжо ў XXI стагоддзі.

У 2017 годзе была публікацыя падборкі ў часопісе “Полымя”. Перакладчык – Мікола Мятліцкі. Пасля гэтых перакладаў Мікалай Міхайлавіч змясціў у сваёй аўтарскай анталогіі перакладаў “Пялёсткі лотаса і хрызантэмы: 100 паэтаў Кітая XXI стагоддзя”. У час беларуска-кітайскіх выдавецкіх перамоў ішла размова і пра перспектывы азнаямлення беларускага чытача з чатырма класічнымі кітайскімі раманами: “Сон у Чырвоным цераме”, “Трохцарства”, “Падарожжа на Захад” і “Рачныя затокі”. А. Карлюкевіч нагадаў, што першыя два з гэтых раманаў – “Сон у Чырвоным цераме” і “Трохцарства” – на рускую мову пераклаў ураджэнец Беларусі Уладзімір Панасюк. Кітайскія калегі заўважылі, што добра ведаюць яго не толькі як літаратуразнаўцу і перакладчыка мастацкай літаратуры, але і як аўтара “Вялікага кітайска-рускага слоўніка” (гэтую працу наш суайчыннік здзейсніў у супольніцтве з Уладзімірам Фёдаравічам Суханавым).

Днямі было 100 год з дня нараджэння Уладзіміра Панасюка. У Маскве жыве яго дачка – Наталля Уладзіміраўна Панасюк... Шырокая, аб’ёмная праца над пераўвасабленнем кітайскіх класічных раманаў на беларускую мову – праект, які можа прынесці гонар любому выдавецтву. Такія справы не рэалізуюцца ў адначасе, а магчыма патрабуюць удзелу некалькіх перакладчыкаў.

Мікола **Берлеж**



■ Кнігі Выдавецкага дома “Звязда”



April update

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