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GOMEL STATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY**

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HISTORY AND CULTURE OF BELARUS

The manual

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In the manual one can find information about the formation and development of first belarussian principalities; sociopolitical and economic development of the Belarus as a part of Great Lithuanian Principality, Rech Paspalitaya, Russian empire and USSR; the major processes and trends in a modern history of Belarus, its cultural heritage.

The manual is intended for foreign students 1st and 2d year medical university, teachers, post-graduate students and competitors.

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Introduction

This country is relatively new to most of the world, and people in the West as a rule only know what rare comments in modern history textbooks can tell them. These comments are mostly related to the years after the 1917 October Bolshevik revolution in Russia.

Belarus has its own language, culture, heritage and, of course, history, as does any other country of the world. The main reason why Belarus is still generally unknown to the world is that most of its historical facts were hidden or artificially connected and identified with Polish, Russian and Soviet histories. True historic evidence of Belarus past became available a relatively short time ago (about 10—15 years). We hope that these notes will be helpful for all interested people who are eager to find out more about the history of this old and original country.

Topic №1: Belarus in ancient times: from forest tribes to the formation of early-feudal principalities.

Scientists confirm the territories between the rivers Dnieper, Pripyat, Dvina, and Bug were inhabited from time immemorial (about 10 thousand years ago). The first evidence of this was founded on the territory of Gomel region near the villages Yuravichi (Kalinkovichi district) and Berdyzh (Chechersk district). Moreover, the first evidence of Slavic tribes living there date back to the very first centuries AC. These tribes lived in small communities located in forests or near rivers and lakes.

The area was completely covered by secular forests. Numerous lakes, rivers and woods allowed our ancestors to live by hunting, fishing, and gathering. On small plots of land near water they also started farming; growing mostly rye, wheat, oats, buckwheat, and flax. In the villages, they kept domestic animals; in addition, bee-keeping was started and spread among the communities.

Each community had its chief, who was the top authority. The family community as a social unit was very important, too. The father was its head, and the mother was its heart. Most people had light brown hair and blue or grey eyes. The clothes of our Belarusian ancestors was usually white, made of flax or wool.

The belief of these tribes was paganism. They had their own pantheon of gods, each responsible for different aspect of their lives. All this information about the prehistoric times of Belarus has been determined, to a large extent from **kurgans**, or ancient graves (they look like small hills), which are still numerous all over Belarus territory. These kurgans contain lots of things from their creator's everyday life: earthenware, weapons, jewelry, clothes, and also Arabic, Indian, Scandinavian, Roman, and German coins, which show that our ancestors had established trade with many European and Asian lands.

The tribes, which actually were historical ancestors of the Belarusian people, can be distinguished from other Slavic tribes after the 6th century. The larg-

est tribe among them were the Kryvichy, or «relatives by blood». They occupied the northern part of today's Belarus. In the south the Drehavichy, in the east — the Radzimichy had been lived. The northwestern part of the territory was occupied by several Baltic tribes. All these tribes had much in common in their languages, customs, and beliefs, and therefore they later merged into one Belarusian national community. The Kryvichy in the north founded the principalities of Polatsk and Smolensk and the Pskov feudal republic; Drehavichy united into the principality of Turau. The principalities of Polatsk and Turau became the first states on the territory of modern Belarus.

They are first mentioned in the chronicles in the 9th century, and are also the oldest centers of Belarusian culture.

After the people of Kiev principality were baptized in 988, the principalities located on the modern Belarus territory adopted Christianity together with the other Eastern Slavic states. However, some historians suspect that Christianity came to Belarus much earlier from Scandinavia.

The power in early Belarusian states belonged to the *vecha*, or council of all of the male citizens of the town and vicinity. All the decisions about war and peace, trade, and internal affairs were made by the vecha. In case of war, the vecha elected *knyaz* (prince) for commanding the armed team and volunteering corps.

One of the first known Polatsk prince was Rahvalod who lived in the 10th century. He struggled against the Kiev and Novgorod princes for influence in the Turau and Smolensk principalities, but died in the battle. Another historical figure in Polatsk was Prince Useslau «the Magician» (1044—1101), who lived at the time of the Polatsk highest power and wealth. It traded with many neighboring and remote countries, controlled other Belarusian towns, and had developed different handicrafts and constructing. Useslau lead the war against the Kiev princes for the control of Pskov and Novgorod — other Slavic principalities. One of the battles of this war occurred near the river Niamiga (now it is the center of Minsk City — Belarusian capital) in 1067, and this is the first mention of the town in a chronicle. In fact, the town was called Mensk from the word *mena* — exchange. Mensk was on the crossroads of trade ways from the North to the South, and therefore was a convenient marketplace.

After the Niamiga battle was won by Kiev, Useslau was imprisoned in Kiev. However, the Kievan prince was also fighting the Turkish tribes in the southern Ancient Russia at the same time, and this war was fatal for him. Seeing this, Kievans discharged Useslau and elected him as the Kiev prince. The newcomer defended Kiev from the enemy and governed the principality for eight months, after which he returned to his native Polatsk. During Useslau's reign, many lands were joined to Polatsk, among them the Minsk, Vitebsk, Orsha, and Slutsk principalities, as well as parts of Livonia and other territories. Useslau was very popular among the people due to his intelligence, courage, and strong character. Many legends and stories about him were created; he was even called «The Magician».

Gomel was first mentioned in chronicles in 1142 and there are two known versions of its name origin. Some scientists believe it took its name from the brook «Gomeiuk» (the territory of present Lunacharsky park in Gomel). Other associate it with the direct meaning of two Slavic words «Go» and «Mel», which mean «shallow water».

At that time all Eastern Slavic principalities were called **Rus**, from Northern Slavic lands later the name *Russia* was derived. Kiev Rus was the state on the territory of modern Ukraine, and only later, when Moscow was founded and gained power to unite other principalities, it took the name «Moscow Rus». At the time that Kiev and Polatsk flourished, Moscow and other eastern Slavic states were small and weak.

The name Belarus (Belarusian) means «white Rus» (white Russian), and there's still no exact version of its origin. Some researchers put it down to the white colour of peasant's everyday clothes and to their fair hair. Other associate it with the direct meaning of the word «bely», which in old Slavic languages meant «free, non-occupied, independent» pointing to the fact that Belarus was never under Tatars' as well as Baltic tribes control, unlike the other principalities later in the 13—15th centuries. Others maintain, that «Belaya Rus» was the land inhabited by Christians, unlike «Black Rus» where pagans lived.

After Useslau the Magician the principality of Polatsk was divided into several smaller principalities which were half-dependent on their more powerful neighbors, mainly Kiev and Novgorod. Sometimes they managed to conquer some lands to the north of Belarus — Livonia and Estonia, but these victories were short-lived and insignificant.

Meanwhile, to the northwest of Slavic lands, in the territories with mixed Baltic and Slavic population, a new state started its growth and development. It was called Lithuania (Litva) and consisted of Eastern Slavic and Baltic tribes. The first capital of Lithuania was Novogrudok (now a district center in Grodno region, Belarus). Later the capital moved in the mid Lithuania and after to Vilno (now Vilnius, the capital of Lithuanian Republic) during the Prince Gedimin ruling.

The new state was called the Great Lithuanian Principality, and at its beginning it was an association of Lithuanian and Eastern Slavic lands under the power of the Great Prince.

Topic № 2. Great Lithuania: Political and Economic Development and Flourishing

New Lithuanian state formed by Mindaug in 1240 tried to enlarge its lands by neighboring more developed principalities. Mindaug tried to pursue a policy of moving between German awards and Russia. In 1251 has accepted Catholicism and a royal title from Roman pope, however in some years he returned to paganism and related with Daniel Galitskim. Mindaug's authority was rather fragile. As a result of one of German plots Mindaug was killed in 1263.

The genealogy of Lithuanian princes before Prince Gedymin is not clear. The origin of Gedymin is authentically unknown, instead of he based a steady dynasty. From that time we can assert about the existence of Great Lithuanian Principality.

The Great Prince Gedymin, who accepted the throne in 1316, limited the power of the members of the Lithuanian federation and, so, the Great Lithuanian Principality became a true monarchy.

Thus, Gedymin strengthened Lithuanian power in Eastern Europe, and the Lithuanian Principality gained its authority and influence.

The wisdom of Gedymin was in his policy towards the conquered lands: he never oppressed the local beliefs, customs, and freedom of people. He understood that he could achieve more by goodness and loyalty than by brutal force.

Gedymin's son, the Great Prince Alherd (1341—1377) continued his father's expansion of Lithuania's borders. He unyoked the Ukraine from the Tatars and joined the rest of the Ukrainian lands to the Great Lithuanian Principality, including the seashore of the Black Sea. But at this time a new enemy appeared at the East — the principality of Moscow, the ancestor of today's Russia. Moscow Principality constantly attacked Lithuania's eastern neighbor and vassal — the Smolensk principality. Alherd had to help Smolensk, and defeated the Moscow troops three times — in 1368, 1370, and 1373. Alherd's army fought to the gates of Moscow, but the Moscow prince Dmitry Donskoy, unable to resist the Lithuanian army, asked Alherd to spare his native town and promised him lots of trophies. Alherd took compassion on him and did not destroy Moscow, but expanded Lithuania's borders yet farther to the East. Alherd wanted Lithuania to become the strongest power of Eastern Europe, and also a center of Orthodox belief. He asked the Constantinople Patriarch, the head of the Orthodox Church, to found the metropoly in Navagrudak. Thus started the extreme rivalry between Lithuania and Moscow for religious and political influence in Eastern Europe.

After Alherd's death in 1377, his younger son Yahaila became the Great prince, in accordance with the treaty between Alherd and his wife. This caused great discontent in Alherd's older son, Andrei, and in the population of the western parts of Lithuania who hoped that the throne would be accepted by Alherd's brother and councillor Keistut. In a short struggle for the throne, Keistut won; he imprisoned Yahaila and proclaimed himself the Great Prince. Shortly after that Yahaila started a revolt against Keistut and occupied a part of the Vilnia region. He invited Keistut and his son Vitaut to Kreva for negotiations, and when they arrived, he captured them and killed Keistut five days later. Vitaut managed to escape from the execution having dressed in woman's clothes. He turned for help to the crusaders who were always ready to participate in Lithuanian internal discords in order to weaken their competitor. Therefore Yahaila, trying to avoid conflicts with the crusaders, allowed Vitaut to return home and gave him the Harodnia principality.

Vitaut's reign and several decades after considered to be the period of the highest economic and political flourishing of Belarus and Belarusian culture. The Old Belarusian language was the state language of the Great Lithuanian Principality; all documents, laws, charts, and other official documents were issued in Old Belarusian; it was used also as an official language in some neighboring states like Moldavia. The statehood in Lithuania was also one of the most liberal in Eastern Europe. The Principality had a parliament consisting of two chambers — Soym and Rada, which replaced the vecha.

The majority of Belarusian cities had their right of self-government, the so-called Magdeburg right, based on elections. All these conditions attracted oppressed people from other countries. Thus, in addition to the Belarusians who occupied so-called Old Lithuania, Zhmudz; the Ukrainians, the indigenous population of the Principality; Tatars from the Golden Horde; and Jews from Germany and other countries of Europe also settled there. The liberal policy of Vitaut towards these peoples attracted them — they could feel free to use their language, religion, and traditions.

The Population of the Grand Lithuanian Principality consisted of two main classes — a lord (boyar) and peasants. On top of the boyar class stood the great Lithuanian prince, who was a sovereign owner of the whole land in state. He also had his own special land holdings, strewn country-wide and formed his individual incomes.

The most multiple lord group formed boyars. For military service prince provided them with lands, with settlings and peasants. It was their salary. For above new landowners were bound by call of the grand duke to be there together with horse and weapon. As time passed, boyars were named themselves «shlahta». All shlaht's representatives considered themselves to be equal in rights, felt and emphasized its superiority before the other classes. Inadmissible occupations for shlahta were crafts and trade. They had numerous privileges, the personal inviolability, advantages in court. Together with high clergy shlahta could participate in ruling the country, elect and to be elected in state authorities.

In XVI v. Grand Lithuanian Principality changed in class feudal state, where shlahta enjoyed people's rights only, but it formed about 10% of a population. Such rights were legally fixed in special Code of laws — Lithuanian statute.

Beside 90% populations formed the peasantry. It was the most humiliated class without any rights. They were only uses the land they worked on.

During XIV—XVI c. land — the main country's wealth was altered in grand duke property as well as in shlaht's and prist's property.

Depending on land owner there were state, shlaht's and conventual (spiritual) peasants. Peasantry settled in villages. Such a peasant's facility named the smoke. Peasantry could not send their lands on inheritance.

Non-facilitated poor peasants formed so-called truck-farmer. They usually existed by casual earnings.

Peasantry of the same village formed the community. They were to pay taxes and perform different obligations to continue using the land. Before the end of XV c. majority of payments were made in products.

Peasantry was divided on similar (free) people and unlike. Similar had a right to go from one lord to another. It was impossible to send them on inheritance. The Lords tried to do peasants unlike. We see the whole history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania — is a history of the peasant's enslavement.

Many cities enjoyed a special privilege (a right of home-ruling). Citizens were permitted to have its Court and solve some public questions, such as crafts and trade, taxes and obligations, economic activity and so on.

Since catholic were Lithuanians, and orthodox — Russian, internal contradictions started to gain the religious base. As a result two parties were formed a Lithuanian and a Russian. They contended in decision-making, internal everyday country's life and external political events.

Moreover, at the end of XV — a first half XVI c. the Crimean Tatars and Moscow state presented the main external threat for Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Moscow considered to have an ancient Rus heritage. It also decided to protect the orthodoxy in Grand Lithuanian Principality. Some orthodox magnates along with their own lands joined to Moscow that formed a specific ground for wars. After war with Moscow in 1500—1503 25 Lithuanian cities and 70 regions were joined to Moscow. When Moscow took Smolensk-city in 1512—1514, Lithuanian Principality lost its strongest positions.

A second half of XVI c. turned out tragic for Lithuanian Principality. Moscow undertakes the efforts to provide itself output to Baltic sea. Livonian Union of Poland and the Great Lithuania Principality was established against Russia. Military actions moved on the territory of present Belarus. The war with Moscow was renewed in 1516, 1518, 1519, 1534, 1535, 1536, 1537, 1542, and 1549; and in actuality, the struggle for Belarus was continuous. It was extremely hard for the Belarusian people; the cities of Polatsk, Vitebsk, Homiel, Amstsislawye, Orsha suffered most of all. The threats of possible Belarus and Ukrainian territorial losses forced the Lithuanian feudal lords to sign the Union with Poland in 1569.

Topic № 3. Belarus in Rech Paspalitaya

In 1569 Poles raised the recurrent question about the unification of Poland and Lithuania. They wished a union in which Poland would dominate, but Belarusian and the Thuds aristocracy refused. But Zhyhimont August treated the proposition positively because of wars with Moscow, Swedes who attacked Livonia, and Crimean Tatars who renewed their raids in southern Ukraine. Though Lithuanian magnates entreated Zhyhimont August for not betraying the country's independence, he ignored them and in 1569 in Lublin, Poland, the state union was signed. According to it the two states united into one — with joint economies, military, and the king in Krakow. Ten times before the Poles had

tried to join Lithuania completely to Poland and with the eleventh attempt, they finally succeeded; the Great Lithuanian Principality became extinct. However, after victory in the Livonian war, the Belarusians managed to create the local government for Lithuania with Belarusian as the state language and with a separate army and budget. The king of Rech Paspalitaya Stephan Batory, who replaced Zhygimont August after his death in 1576, managed to drive the Muscovites away from Polatsk and Livonia, thus winning the Livonian war. Unfortunately, during the battle for Polatsk, many architectural and written monuments were destroyed by fire.

In spite of the wars and troubles, the 14th through 16th centuries are considered to be the flourishing period in Belarusian culture. Lithuania was one of the main cultural centres in Eastern Europe. Belarusian artists, painters, and architects were in demand all over Europe; written Belarusian became highly developed language. In the beginning of the 16th century, with the spread of book-printing, the first books were printed in the Belarusian language. The first church books in Belarusian started appearing in 1483 in Krakow, and in 1517 the first Belarusian Bible was translated and printed in Prague by Dr. Francysk Skaryna from Polatsk (1492—1550); thus Belarusian became the second Slavic language after Czech in which the Bible was printed. Only years after that was book-printing started in Ukrainian, Polish, Zhmudz, Latvian, and Russian. Francysk Skaryna worked in Prague till 1520 and then he returned to Vilnia, where Belarusian typography has already been founded. He translated from Latin other religious texts supplying them with his forewords and afterwords. The book-printing activity of Skaryna was a very important factor in enlightening and educating the Belarusian people; that is why he is considered the biggest contributor to the Belarusian culture of the Renaissance. The year of his 500th anniversary, 1992, was proclaimed by UNESCO the year of Skaryna. After him education and book-printing rapidly spread all over Belarus; schools and typographies were opened in many towns and many books were printed there by Skaryna's successors Vasil Tiapinski, Symon Budny, Symon Polatski and others. Many Belarusian cultural achievements were adopted by other East European countries; for example, many church books in Russian and Ukrainian were later translated from Belarusian; the first Moscow Code of laws of 1649 copied many laws of Lithuanian issued in Belarusian more than a century before. At that time most of the Belarusian chronicles which are known now were written. The Belarusian scientist Kazimir Semianovich was one of the first who studied rocket theory; another scientist, Gallash Kapievich from Vitebsk invented a simplified variant of the Cyrillic alphabet which was more suitable for printing and later started being used by all Cyrillic-writing peoples. Lots of young aristocratic Belarusian people at that time visited Western Europe where they studied in universities and lived in the spirit of the Renaissance. One of them, the poet Mikola Husouski, left a wonderful monument of Belarusian literature written in

Latin while he lived in Italy — «Song about the Aurochs». This youth was the first to bring the Reformation from Western Europe to Belarus.

After Vitaut's death the obscured contradictions between the Orthodox and Catholic population of Lithuania started growing, mostly due to the expanded influence of Poland and Russia since both Catholic and Orthodox churches in Belarus depended on religious centres outside Belarus — the Vatican and Warsaw, and Moscow. Even Navahradak eparchy after Vitaut's death appeared under the Moscow Patriarchate's influence. That's why many educated people of Belarus believed that the Protestant church may serve as a shield for Belarusian independence; special activity in promoting the Reformation in Belarus was performed by Prince Mikalai Radzivill, the Black. He founded 163 Calvinist (Presbyterian) parishes, schools, and gymnasiums in Belarus, wishing to turn the whole country to Calvinism. But soon after that Polish Jesuits expanded their activities in the country aiming at strengthening Polish influence. The Jesuits worked it out in all branches of culture founding schools, universities, and monasteries. The revolution of the Reformation moved all people's thoughts, customs, and ideals; new support was needed, and the Jesuits turned out to be stronger in this battle for human minds. They managed to win the Protestant moods in Belarus and turned to Catholicism a major of population. In their urge to establish control over the Orthodox population, they suggested a church union which would unite both churches and be headed by the Roman Pope. Jesuits saw the possibility of creating a church independent from Poland and Moscow, and they agreed to the union, which was signed in Brest in 1595. Thus the Unite, or Greek Catholic church, was founded. Unfortunately, the Unite church was ruled by the Jesuits who tried to eliminate all Orthodox traditions in the new church. This caused a wide wave of people's protests and killed the idea of Belarusian independence for centuries, due to the failure of Greek Catholicism to become the Belarusian independent religion. The history of Belarus turned to be the history of popular protests against its oppressors.

In the beginning of the 17th century the internal fights for power in Moscow started again; the so-called False Demetrius started a revolt against the tsar Boris Godunov, and Rech Paspalitaya used these conflicts for rejoining the territories occupied by Moscow. Thus, in 1609 Zhyhimont August liberated Smolensk and entered Moscow. The truce was signed only in 1618, according to which Smolensk joined Rech Paspalitaya. Meanwhile, the oppressed Orthodox people started escaping from Belarus to the southern Ukraine, where since old times there lived Cossacks — free farmers who did not recognize any power over them. They sometimes attacked the neighbouring Turkish villages causing indignation of the Turks who started threatening Rech Paspalitaya with war. In response, the Polish authorities limited many rights of the Cossacks and forced them to accept the Unite church by closing Orthodox churches or renting them to the Jews.

The Cossacks started revolts against the Poles and against Polish and Catholic influence. The biggest revolt occurred in 1648 under the command of Bohdan Hmelnitski. He managed to gather a huge army of Cossacks — about half a million people — which defeated the Polish troops in several battles. These victories were heartily supported by most of the Belarusian farmers; some of them started their own revolts but were defeated by getman Radzivill. The Cossack war lasted till 1654 until Hmelnitski had to ask Moscow for help. Moscow established its control over most of the Ukraine and together with the Cossacks, the Muscovites occupied the entire Great Lithuanian Principality as well as its capital Vilna.

At this same time, Sweden renewed their war against Poland and quickly occupied it and started negotiations with Moscow about the division of conquered territories. But the Muscovites didn't trust the Swedes; they believed the Poles, who had promised to give them all of the Belarusian and Ukrainian lands. Moscow stopped its war against Rech Paspalitaya after which the Polish troops defeated the Swedes, and the Lithuanian army managed to defeat the Moscow troops.

This victory made some of the Belarusian magnates think about the restoration of independence of the Great Lithuanian Principality, but their leader, Yanush Radzivill, who had tried to create a union between Lithuania and Sweden in 1655, perished in the war with the Poles. Another attempt was undertaken by the Belarusian magnate Paul Sapega, but it failed, too. In order to kill the spirit of resistance, in 1697, the Poles forbade the use of the Belarusian language in the courts and other official cases, and in 1699 they forbade the election of Orthodox citizens in local governments. These acts were a knife to the back of the Belarusian — they blocked the development of Belarusian culture and deprived Belarusian of many rights.

In 1697 the throne of Rech Paspalitaya was occupied by August II, the Saxon, German by origin. He wanted to subordinate Livonia, which was under the Swedes; and jointly with Denmark and Moscow he started the war against Sweden in 1700, the so-called Northern war. Most of the military events took place on Belarusian territory, resulting in terrible devastation. Each side, in order to destroy possible reserves and benefits for the enemy, systematically burned Belarusian towns and villages. Finally the war was won in 1721 by the tsar Peter I who proclaimed himself the Russian emperor, after which Russia became the strongest power in Europe.

Meanwhile, the religious conflicts reached their peak in Rech Paspalitaya. In 1768 the Orthodox and Protestant authorities founded a confederation, in response to which the Catholics founded another confederation and started a war against the first one. Orthodox leaders turned to Russia for help and received it since Russia was eager to support any internal conflicts in Rech Paspalitaya. The force of Russia on the state grew year after year, and in 1773 Russian troops again appeared in Rech Paspalitaya as if to defend the Orthodox belief. After the

occupation, the first division of Rech Paspalitaya occurred; and according to its conditions, Belarusian territories up to the Dnieper were joined to Russia. As a result of the continuation of internal discords in Rech Paspalitaya, Russian troops were again involved in 1793, and this resulted in a second division in which the rest of Belarus as well as northern Ukraine appeared under Russian power. After that, revolt against the Russians took place in Poland. It was led by Tadevush Kasciushka born in Belarus, who later took part in the War for Independence in America. But this revolt was suppressed and the third division of Rech Pospolitaya occurred, by which Poland also became Russian territory; Rech Paspalitaya together with Lithuania disappeared as a state. The will of the Russian tsars, beginning at the time of Vasily, finally came true, and Belarus was an endless battlefield for nearly 200 years as a result.

So this was the most complex and inconsistent period in Belarusian history. The Rech Paspalitaya turned out to be in a deep political crisis with sharp national and religious contradictions. In XVII and XVIII cc. Rech Pospolitaya had conducted several wars with Russia, Sweden, Prussia and Turkey; as a result it forfeited much of its territory in the east and south. Different groups of authorities appeared. They feuded with a king and with each other, so that they also collaborated with country's enemies. Sometimes Seim could not take any resolution because the law needed autocratic voting. Grafts and lobbying prospered. Economic and political privileges in the state used only by lords-roman Catholics polish and Lithuanian origin. There were little magnate-Belarusian occupied high state and military titles. A major part of Belarusian aristocracy adopted Catholicism.

Topic № 4. Belarusian Ethnic Generality Formation in 15—17th cc

Belarus nationality, as well as Russian and Ukrainian, was formed on the general basis of an old Russian nationality. This gradual process formed the basic attributes inherent to Belarusian ethnos (the territory, prevailing economic way, common language, the culture mentality and ethnic consciousness) took some centuries. The process of Belarusian nationality formation began when the Belarus lands were in structure of the Great Lithuanian Principality (GLP), and then Rezh Pastalitaya — XIV—XVIII centuries. What were the main reasons led to a uniform old Russian generality split up to three separate nations — Belarusian, Russian and Ukrainians?

First of all, in conditions of a subsistence economy domination, weak internal economic relations, rare migrations of the big people's groups adhered to the native land was quite impossible to keep a unite language and culture on such a big territory where old eastern Russian population lived. Language and culture are always change.

Settled on a large territory from the Black up to the White seas once uniform eastern Slav ethnos was influenced of territorial factor. Some attributes inherent to Belarus ethnos formed basis old Russian state. So, a number of particu-

lar features in Belarusian speech are visible in documents of the first half of XIII century, and in the text of Brest letters (end of XIII c.). It's heard specific features of Belarusian language soft «z».

Scientists consider the Belarus nationality developed on that part of Russia, where moving Slav Baltic tribes had lived before. Exactly, the assimilation process took some centuries, so that Eastern Slavs mixed with the part of Baltic tribes with its original language and cultural features could promote an occurrence and fastening some features inherent only to Belarusian.

Formation of Belarussian nationality took a long time.

By the end of XIV century all territory of modern Belarus was a part of a new state formation — the Great Lithuanian Principality. Government organization and uniform legislation produced a sensitive impact on the specific system dividing the country on a set of fine lands. A strong Supreme authority established in the Lithuanian state at the end of XIV — the beginning of XV century, promoted unifying processes and an establishment of closer economic and ethnic communications in various areas. There were created objective preconditions for formation of ethnic territory of Belarusian.

GLP was a multinational state, so that Ukrainian ethnos could also be generated on this ground.

During the period of XIV—XVI cc. the general features of eastern Slav's economics and population were fixed and a multifield-system of agriculture was affirmed everywhere. An identical types of instruments for processing ground and harvesting were distributed. The wooden harrow began to be applied to loosening ground, closing up in it of seeds.

Household culture turns to be uniform. The most widespread is steady internal lay-out log hut. Basis on old Russian man's and female suits characteristics affirms a national clothing. The general features are seen in food, ceremonies and customs, rituals, national fine art.

As a result of increased economic activity the strong city estates were formed.

Essential transformations were taken place in eastern Slav language. Gradually it got a variety of new features inherent in language of new ethnos. These changes have touched phonetics, lexicon and syntax. Among phonetic (sound) changes especially appreciable became «dzekanne» and «zekanne» (dzen instead of old Russian «den» — day, «zen» instead of a «ten» — shadow), a firm pronunciation of a sound «ar», «akanne» and «yakanne» (Byaroza), use of added consonants and vowel sounds in the beginning of a word (vozero instead of «ozero» — lake, vuliza instead of «uliza» — linen).

Being an official language of the state documents, the legislation and legal proceedings in GLP, the Belarusian language was enriched by new lexicon. There were general names of duties, officials and bodies of the government. Loans words and expressions penetrated into Belarusian language from the Lithuanian and Polish languages.

The majority of the Belarus feudal stopped speaking their native language when Belarus was submitted to Rezh Paspalitaya, so that development of the Belarus literary language was slowed down. Many words have penetrated into lexicon from the Polish language and medieval Latin. Being enriched with new lexicon, language has kept many old Russian features.

Being submitted to the GLP, the population former western Russian lands did not separate itself (according to ethnic criteria) from the rest population of Russian areas and named itself Russian. So did the great Belarus educator and enlightener of XVI century Francisk Scaryna.

Belarus people realized the general eastern European and Russian historical roots. They professed one religion influenced strongly on consciousness, a way of life, behavior and people's upbringing. The concept «orthodox» was identified with concept «Russian». Therefore all professing Orthodoxy automatically consider themselves as Russian.

After the Union conclusion in 1769, the Polish language and culture as well as Catholicism were wide spread in ruling class of feudal lords. Above strengthened people in consciousness of difference from Catholic — feudal lord speaking in language alien and native belarussian, visiting Orthodox church.

Thus, there were many preconditions and reasons of Belarus nationality formation.

The historical documents of 16—17 cc. testify that inhabitants of the GLP and later Rezh Paspalitaya coming in Moscow state-named themselves litvins or Belarusian, sometimes Litvin-Belarusian in 17 century. Apparently, the above distinctions appeared because of western Belarusian lands were earlier a part of the Lithuanian state. Therefore in some documents that part of Belarus named the Lithuanian Russia.

Modern linguists think, that the combination of words «white» and «Russia» has appeared in documents in the XVI—XVII centuries for the designation of western Russian lands occupied by eastern Slavs.

Native population in the eastern part of Rezh Paspalitaya named themselves Belarusian. Gradually the term «Belarusian» was distributed to all eastern Slavs, occupied the territory of today's Belarus.

Topic № 5. Belarus in Russian Empire (1772—1917)

Belarus and Russian Empire unification marked the end of a long period of Eastern Slavic separation and their reunion in the uniform state. Though for this period there were essential changes in the east branch of Slavs: a uniform old Russian ethnos was divided into three nations — Belarusian, Russian and Ukrainians. They remained very close to each other in language, traditional culture, religion and even in consciousness. This affinity was so obvious, that Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainians were considered as three parts of one big nation. Available distinctions were the result of their compelled historical isolation from each other, «Polonization» and «Catonization» during its stay in «Rech Paspalitaya».

Nevertheless, the Russians in Belarus immediately started persecuting everything Belarusian. The goal of this persecution was to destroy all thoughts of Belarusian statehood and to «Russify» all Belarusian people. This policy, of course, cared very little of people's needs and wishes. «People» in the sense of those times were primarily knights, the aristocracy, and merchants; farmers and the peasants (serfs) were not considered as representatives of the Belarusian people. Russia announced to other countries that the newly conquered territories were Russian and that the conquest itself did not happen - it was just a reunification of the same people.

All Russian rights were given to landowners. Belarusian and Russian landowners were equal in the rights and in religion question. Catholic churches and monasteries had been left in Catholic property. However Russians forbade Catholic and Uniate clerics worship their religion to Orthodoxy.

The legal system was reformed gradually. Provincial «mirovie» courts were established. However in legal proceedings up to 1840 the Lithuanian Statute or the Belarusian Code of Laws of 1588 had been following.

The part of landlord's and «shlahta's» lands together with peasants were sold to Russian military leaders and landowners. The land tax was considerably reduced.

Probably, in attempting to destroy Belarusian culture, the Russians closed the University in Polatsk in 1820, in 1832 the same thing happened to the University in Vilna. Russian schools and national schools had been establishing. In 1839, the Russians forbade using the Belarusian language in churches and schools, and also abolished the Uniate church, which at the end of Rech Pospolitaya started being a defender of Belarusian and Ukrainian culture and education. In 1840 Belarus was named the «Northwestern Region». Simultaneously, the glorious historical Belarusian name Lithuania related only to a purely Baltic tribe, the Zhmudz, which had never been called Lithuanians; since then, they have kept this name as the name of their country.

Some large manufactories were established: linen, sailing, thread, cloth, glass, etc. A special attention was given to road construction. In the beginning of XIX century the population of cities has grown almost on 1/3.

In 1812 the war between Russia and Napoleon started. Both the route of Napoleon to Moscow and his escape from there passed through the territory of Belarus, devastating it yet again to ashes. The French emperor Napoleon I had 600-thousand army, on contrary Russian counted approximately 200 thousand militaries only. Belarusian supported Russian militaries in products and supplies, informed on French army's movements. The population was imposed with heavy taxes and duties.

However, Napoleon turned to be a supporter of the idea of the Belarusian state, though in a shape that suited his interests. During the short period of occupation, he created two Belarusian states — «Lithuania» which was on the territory of the Belastok, Harodnia (Hrodna), Vilnia and Minsk regions (again without Zhmudz), and «Belarus», which occupied the eastern Belarusian lands. In

case of a truce, Napoleon was going to give «Belarus» to Moscow leaving «Lithuania» under his power. Belarusian, certainly, did not like these intentions and raised the question of unification of the two states. But this situation did not last too long — still in 1812.

The ideas of the French Revolution of 1789 — Freedom, Equality, and Fraternity — reached the souls of all the oppressed peoples of Europe including the Belarusian. Before the closing of Vilnia University, a new wave of Belarusian renaissance started there. Under the influence of its professors and a progressive group of students, other Belarusian also became interested in the history and the idea of Belarusian ethnic. Since the Belarusian language under the Russians was not allowed to be used in education, Polish was opposed to Russian as a language of the Belarusian intelligentsia. The first Belarusian poets of this period — Yan Chachot who wrote both in Polish and Belarusian and Uladyslau Syrakomla — also came from the progressive students' organizations. New cultural artists appeared in Belarus, among which were Vincent Dunin-Martsinkevich, a very fruitful Belarusian playwright, and polonized Belarusian composer Stanislau Maniushka — the authors of the first Belarusian opera.

About 90% of Belarusian population were peasants. 70% were as serfs and landowner's property. The state peasants made 19 %. Peasants were given an allotment from the landowner and had to work it off on landlord's grounds as well as to pay taxes in products and money. In 1861 in Russia and in «Northwestern» region the reform was implemented. It cancelled the serfdom on Russian and Belarusian lands. Peasants became free. They already could not be sold, bought, pawned and moved. Peasants were given personal and property rights, but were considered temporarily obliged and had to pay taxes before transition somewhere.

Together with the cultural renaissance, the spirit of protest against the unification was growing among the Belarusian youth. The preparation for revolt was actively taking place and finally exploded into rising in arms in 1863.

The revolt was started in Poland and soon was expanded to Belarus and Lithuania where it achieved its culmination. There were 80,000 rebel troops, and they managed to fight more than 260 battles against 200,000 Russian soldiers. The goals of the rebels were first of all independence of Belarus to the extent of the borders of the Great Lithuanian Principality, freedom and land for the farmers, and free access to education. They talked to farmers, merchants, and artisans and explained the importance of armed revolt. For wider publicity, Kalinouski illegally issued a newspaper «Muzhytskaya Prauda» («Peasant's Truth») After Kalinouski execution the revolt was quickly suppressed; lots of people were hanged, shot, or exiled to Siberia. In order to prevent further riots, the tsarist government forbade any printing in the Belarusian language.

Gratitude to Belarusian peasants who did not supported revolt, the government made a number of the important decisions which considerably facilitated position of peasants in Belarus.

Belarusian ethnologists Karski, Nikifarouski, and others who were forced to work for the Russians, but still continued their investigations and proved that in spite of repressions, the Belarusian people, language, and culture goes on in its historical development. Also the political protests of Belarusian kept going on. The most outstanding representative of Belarusian renaissance of this period was author Frantsishak Bahushevich, also a rebel of 1863. In his poems he showed Belarusian their glorious past and claimed them for preserving and restoring Belarusian culture and statehood. He had to print his books abroad. Together with Bahushevich, the enlightenment was led by the writers Yanka Luchyna, Adam Hurynovich, and others. Due to their works, the foundation for the further education and renaissance of Belarus was laid, and the country entered the 20th century ready for a new wave in the movement for liberation.

In 1902 in Minsk, the first Belarusian political organization was founded — the Belarusian Socialist Hramada (Union) — BSH. It illegally printed books by Frantsishak Bahushevich, Yanka Luchyna, and other writers. At its congress in Vilnia in 1903, the BSH aimed to create the Autonomous Belarusian Republic with its parliament in Vilnia. The revolution in Russia in 1905 and the military misfortunes of the Russo-Japanese war forced Russian authorities to grant some freedoms to the national minorities, after which the BSH started legally printing the newspaper «Nasha Niva» («Our Field») which became a voice of the Belarusian cultural Renaissance. All the best Belarusian poets and writers, the founders of contemporary Belarusian literature, such as Yanka Kupala, Maksim Bahdanovich, Yakub Kolas, Ales Harun, and Maksim Haretski were published in «Nasha Niva». From this newspaper dozens of Belarusian writers, journalists, artists, and political leaders started their careers. Also among the participants of «Nasha Niva» was Belarusian poetess Alaiza Pashkevich whose revolutionary poems and charity activity was very helpful in the functioning of Belarusian organizations. Artist Ihnat Buinitski who created a Belarusian ensemble of song and dance also participated. The Belarusian intelligentsia often went abroad and took part in different congresses and festivals getting support for its activities.

The major unresolved problems remained peasant's lands lack and absence of political freedoms. For the decision of the first problem minister Stolypin had developed and carried out a new land reform. Unfortunately, the Stolypin reform could not solve a peasant's land problem, because the basic land funds remained in landowner's hands and did not pressed to be redistributed.

World War I started in 1914 and made again Belarus a battle field. Vilnia was occupied by the Germans while another Belarusian center — Minsk — remained under the Russians. The contacts between the different parts of Belarus were broken.

In February, 1917 the excitements in Petrograd had developed into revolution. As a result Tsar Nikolai II refused a throne and the authority passed to Provisional government. Simultaneously, a new authorities — Working Communities were spread all over the country, which formed a parallel government. An active political parties appeared in the country: «The Union of Russian people» and «Octobers», cadets, Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, Jewish party «Bund», etc.

Topic № 6. Formation and becoming BSSR (1919—1941)

In 1917 the revolutionary movement began to increase. The main slogans of Bolsheviks became «Peace to people» and «Land to peasants». On October, 25 (on November, 7 in new calendar) 1917 according to decision of the Central Bolsheviks Committee ruled by V.I. Lenin, the Provisional government was arrested and All-Russian congress was proclaimed a unique authority in Russia. This event named in history as the Great October Socialist Revolution.

The revolutions of 1917 in Russia first drove away the tsarist bureaucrats from the «Russian» part of Belarus. Under this unstable political situation all the Belarusian public organizations gathered in the All-Belarusian Congress, the purpose of which was to decide the political future of Belarus. The Congress decided to proclaim the autonomous Belarusian Democratic Republic, but was disbanded by the Bolsheviks.

In the spring of 1918, the Germans renewed their attack and pushed the Russian communists from Minsk and central Belarus. The Rada (Council) of the All-Belarusian Congress in Minsk proclaimed itself the temporary power in Belarus and on March, 25, 1918 proclaimed the creation of the Belarusian People's Republic (BPR) which was to embrace all the territories with a majority of Belarusian population. In fact, it occupied only the central part of modern Belarus. Its parliament proclaimed all the main principles of democracy like freedom of speech, printing, religion, unions, strikes, personal inviolability, and the equal rights of all the people in Belarus. The Belarusian People's Republic was the first Belarusian independent state after the Great Lithuanian Principality. No country in the world It was recognized de jure by the Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Finland, Poland, Turkey, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Armenia, and Georgia; most of the other countries of the world recognized Belarus de facto. Nowadays, there is also an opinion, that no one country recognized Belarus as an independent state. The new government of the country started the work of restoration of the land which had been devastated, robbed, and oppressed for centuries.

Meanwhile, the Germans, who did not recognize the BPR, caused different obstacles for its functioning. Soon, however, Germany was defeated, and the young Belarusian People's Republic found itself in between the two huge aggressive forces — the Russian Bolsheviks from the east and Polish marshal Pilsudski with his army from the west. Both forces were against an independent Belarus and tried to occupy it. On January 1st, 1919, to counterbalance the BPR, Smolensk communists proclaimed the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (BSSR) with the capital in Minsk. In his turn, Pilsudski informed Belarus about his plans to create a federation of Poland, Belarus, Lithuania, and the Ukraine. Belarusian did not trust him, and later it became clear that Poles cared very little about the autonomy of Belarus — they just adjoined all occupied lands to Poland. This happened in 1921 after the Soviet-Polish war. The armed forces of the Belarusian People's Republic

were too weak to protect their country from aggressors. The Belarusian People's Republic was smashed and divided between Soviet Russia and Poland. The Bolsheviks took over the bigger part, where they placed the BSSR with its capital in Minsk, which later in 1922 was the co-founder of the USSR; Western Belarus with its 4 million people was joined to Poland. The governmental authority and Rada of the BPR had to escape abroad — to Lithuania.

During the first years of Soviet Belarus, the communist encouraged Belarusian cultural development. Many Belarusian scientists, writers, and artists returned from emigration and started active work in re-opening Belarusian educational, scientific, and cultural institutions. Wide explorations of Belarusian history, ethnology, economy, and natural resources were made at that time; lots of journals and books in Belarusian started being printed. Several universities and institutes including Belarusian State University and The Academy of Science in Minsk were opened in the 1920s; lots of conferences, including international ones, took place in Minsk as well. The foreign guests often were surprised by the vitality of Belarusian cultural life. Belarusian economists prepared agricultural reform close to Danish and Dutch patterns, which had, of course, nothing to do with Soviet collective farms. In spite of these achievements, the freedoms of communist Belarus were very limited; everything was covered by strict Bolshevik ideology, and it was dangerous even to think about a free press or speech.

The main authorities in the USSR proclaimed the program of new state and society construction, based on the principles of socialism: the collective property, social justice and equality of all nations.

According to previous plans for further country development and economy reorganization, its industrialization and collectivization in agriculture began. The centralized control system had the big shortcoming it constrained an economic initiative of the enterprises and practically excluded any forms of competition.

This progress was stopped in the early 1930s, when Stalin gained power and started waves of repression against any sign of different trends of thinking. Hundreds of Belarusian scientific and cultural leaders were arrested by fictitious accusations and sentenced to death or exile to Siberia. Among the victims of Stalinist terror were the Belarusian politicians Zmimer Zhylunovich, Vatslau Lastouski, the writers Maksim Haretski, Mikhas Zaretski, Yanka Kupala, Kuzma Chorny, and the scientists. Hundreds of thousands of farmers were exiled to Soviet concentration camps in the process of the creation of the collective farms — collectivization. Over a million innocent people of the BSSR were arrested, shot, tortured to death, or died in concentration camps during the Stalinist terror. People were frightened to the point of panic by the possibility of arrest all over the USSR. The agents of State Secure Committee and informers slandered more and more people; the bloody 30s, 40s, and early 50s were the dark years in the history of all the former Soviet republics that diminished, changed and even destroyed the ideas of social justice, socialism and communism, declared in USSR and BSSR Constitutions of 1936 and 1937 accordingly.

The situation in Western Belarus under the Polish power was not better. Belarusian deprived of all the rights to national self-determination and consciousness. In its urge to «polonize» them, Poland liquidated all Belarusian schools, forbade the Belarusian language in the Catholic churches, and took more and more land from Belarusian farmers. The Poles did not even use the word Belarus — the official name for the occupied lands was «Wschodnie Kresy», which means «Eastern crosses» if translated from Polish. The Belarusian political organizations and their leaders fought for protection of Belarusian rights there.

In 1939, according to the «Molotov-Ribbentrop pact», Western Belarus was joined to the USSR while Hitler started World War II by occupying Poland. The Soviet «liberation» put Western Belarus in a situation similar to that of the BSSR with its waves of terror. Nearly a half-million people from Western Belarus were exiled to Siberia. According to the German-Soviet treaty of 1939, the USSR also occupied the Western Ukraine, Bessarabia (present Moldova), Baltic countries of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.

When fascists authorities won the elections in Germany (1933), they openly proclaimed a policy of revision the results of the World War 1, so that the world appeared before a new World War.

Topic № 7. Great Patriotic War and post-war period in BSSR

The short period of German-Soviet friendship ended on June, 22nd 1941 — the two monstrous dictatorships started their war which was the most terrible war ever for Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia.

Germany possessed the strongest army in the whole Europe, motorized and equipped with the latest military European technique. Fascist governors were sure in a fast victory over Soviet Union called «lightning war» prior to the beginning of winter.

Belarus was, as usual, the place of heaviest battles. Here the largest German grouping «Center» aimed to Moscow was coming. In the first days of war the German aircrafts destroyed frontier military air stations, railway and cities. Red Army had not time to organize strong defensive system and sustained the big losses.

Defenders of the Brest fortress made a feat. Up to the middle of July, almost month, appearing in rear of German armies, separate groups of fortress defenders was continuing to fight. For the heroism of a fortress it was given an award as «Fortress — hero».

On June, 28 1941 Minsk was captured. More than a month the Red Army defended Gomel. Not far from Vitebsk a new weapon — the jet installation «Katiusha» was applied. During battles for Belarus it was mobilized over 500 thousand of inhabitants. About two millions worked on construction of defensive works.

Then, the whole territory of Belarus was occupied by the Germans very soon after the war had been started. The only resistance that could occur under those conditions was an underground partisan movement, and it was started immediately and aggressively.

The plans of Hitler were to make Belarusian German slaves, exploit the whole nation and the entire country. They continued the policy of mass terrorist killing, burning, and devastating whole villages together with their inhabitants. Aggressors led more than 100 retaliatory expeditions against the peace population. In March, 1943 Germans burnt alive all inhabitants of village Khatyn near Logoisk (Minsk region). More than 380 thousand persons were shipped to Germany for compulsory works.

Germans took out the industrial equipment, raw material and a wood to Germany. Scientific institutes, schools, theatres, museums, libraries were plundered and destroyed. The plan «East» developed by fascist authorities provided destruction and eviction of 75% of Belarusian. A quarter of the population of Belarus was killed; that's 2.5 million people. Together with the Belarusian, the Jewish, Ukrainian, and Russian populations of Belarus were kept in over 200 concentration camps and killed there. Only in one of them, near Minsk, 205 thousand persons were killed from Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria, France, Poland.

Partisans undermined bridges and warehouses of ammunition, commandant's offices and police stations, killed German soldiers and officers. Over 437 thousand partisans battled against German invaders officially, while about 400 thousand persons helped them unofficially in so-called the «latent reserve».

In August, 1943 the Belarus partisans carried out the plan of the «rail war» — simultaneous undermining of tracks.

Of course, the German military prevented any manifestations of Belarusian national feelings. Only at the end of 1943 — when it was already too late — they changed their policies to some extent. They permitted the creation of the Belarusian Central Rada to manage the internal affairs, though it was controlled by Germans. In 1944 in Minsk, the Second All-Belarusian Congress again proclaimed the Belarusian desire for independence and self-determination. A black side of Belarusian history were so-called «polizai», those who supported fascists during the war. Unfortunately, they used Belarusian national symbols on their clothing (historical white-red-white flag and the coat of arms of the Great Lithuanian Principality) when killing and tortured Belarusian.

The Soviet Army which by that time succeeded in turning the Germans back, took over Belarus in the summer of 1944 (Bagration operation), liberating it from the German occupation and restoring the conditions of the earlier one, which used to be before the war.

For the extraordinary losses of World War II, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic was granted a seat in the United Nations; so was the Ukraine. Thus, the USSR controlled 3 places there. In the post-war years, Belarus started

being rebuilt, mostly with the help of other USSR republics. But the pre-war population of Belarus was restored only in the late 1970s. Nobody will also return to Belarus the dozens of architectural and other cultural monuments which were destroyed, burned, or stolen during the Great Patriotic war. Minsk, Gomel, Polatsk, Vitebsk, Brest, Hrodna were ruined almost completely- all Belarusian cities were severely damaged, as a result of this war, which along with World War I, deprived Belarus of a half of its cultural heritage. 209 smaller cities and settlements, 9200 villages (706 of them together with people), over 10 thousand industrial enterprises were burnt and destroyed. Belarus also suffered territorial losses — the Belastok region was granted to Poland.

All the Soviet events of the post-war period were, of course, all reflected in Belarus, too. It came through the end of Stalinism, the Khrushchev «thaw», the durable stagnation of the Brezhnev government, the Cold War, and perestroika. These years were difficult for Belarusian national culture and language. All the creative work was under communist control and was made to serve the Soviet ideology. Russians who occupied all the dominating positions in leadership of the Soviet Union attempted to built socialism by rusifying people all over the territory of USSR, including the BSSR. They started doing it in 1933 when the first «reform» of the Belarusian language was held. Then other «reforms» followed it. The purpose of these «reforms» was to make Belarusian as much like Russian as possible in order to mix Russian and Belarusian nations. The same policy was lead towards other languages in the former of USSR, but they were too different from Russian, so less success was achieved. Belarusian was slowly replaced by Russian which was called «the educated language» while Belarusian was called «rude» and «farmer's». Therefore many Belarusian started to forget their language in favor of Russian. In post war years Russian became the main language in BSSR; Belarusian, pure and mixed with Russian remained only in the countryside.

Nevertheless, Russian communist influence on BSSR was mostly positive, than negative. It became typical the development of mechanical engineering metal working and power supply sources amplification. New industrial branches: automobile and tractor-constructing were created.

From the middle of 50th, an industrial development started from the branches which defined a scientific and technical progress: instrument-making, radio engineering, chemical, petrochemical, fuel and energy. The rates of industrial development in BSSR surpassed an average Soviet Union criteria.

The real wages grew up. The population had been receiving an increased payments from so-called «public funds» in the form of granting free or under very low prices permits in sanatorium, rest houses, etc. A new system of pension provision was established. The majority of population was given free habitation and a low payment for municipal services. We had and still have free of charge public health services and a system of education (primarily, secondary, technical, university, post-graduate, etc.).

New cities appeared on a Belarusian map. The special attention was inverted on economic development of non-industrialized western areas of BSSR.

The most significant were economic, cultural and scientific relations with the socialist countries as Poland and German Democratic Republic, China, India, northern Korea, Cuba, Egypt, some African countries. In 1985 about 300 Belarusian enterprises exported its production to about 100 countries in different corners of the world.

However, an agriculture situation was especially difficult. Insufficient technical equipment, the low payment, a unreasoned tax and price policy of the state did not stimulate work, initiated irresponsibility and low labor productivity in collective farms.

The economy of BSSR had been developing as an integral part of USSR centralized economic system. Efficiency in economic relations was low as a result of administrative centralized ruling and extra barriers as well as absence of Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Trade and Relations responsible for international relations.

In April, 1986, a new and terrible tragedy happened to Belarus — the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear plant. Though the station itself was situated in the Ukraine, the winds blew in the direction of Belarus the whole time after the incident. As a result, 70 per cent of all radioactive elements fell on Belarusian land, turning one fifth of it into a zone of radioactive contamination. The population of this zone is about 2.5 million — these are people who were affected most of all, but the rest of Belarusian were also exposed to radiation, to a large degree, due to the misinformation provided officials in the first days. This resulted to a decrease in the national health — the level of cancers, genetic mutations, and leukemia has strongly increased. Nobody knows what effect it will cause for the long-term existence of the Belarusian nation.

At the beginning of 80th an economic administration system did not bring a desirable productive effect any more.

Communist authorities had created themselves various privileges, before they came away from common people and lost their trust.

In 1990, the Baltic republics (Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia) left the structure of the USSR without special procedures stipulated by the Soviet law. A disintegration of the USSR has begun.

For its patience and suffering carried out through the centuries, Belarus was arrogantly called by the Soviet leaders «a tolerant republic». Even during perestroika Belarus was a stronghold of conservatism.

On July, 27 1990 the Supreme Soviet of BSSR accepted «the Declaration of the State Independence». The declaration proclaimed the sovereignty, leadership, independence within its territory and independence in external attitudes.

By the end of March, 1991 the referendum had been lead. The majority of population supported the preservation of updated Soviet Union (82,7% votes).

Belarusian officials and opposition were paving the way for economy reformation and life democratization to overcome an obvious economic and political stagnation as well as a creation of a new independent state.

On September, 21, 1991 the independent Republic of Belarus was proclaimed in Minsk, and the historical white-red-white flag and the coat of arms of the Great Lithuanian Principality became its official symbols.

Topic № 8. Independent Belarus

The World learnt about Viskuli in September 8th, 1991 when the USSR ceased to exist. It is in Viskuli where the leaders of three Slavonic republics of the USSR were summoned to dissolve the Soviet Union. Belaviezhskaja Puscha proved its historical significance having become a noticeable point on the political map.

Unexpectedly without any consultations of other Soviet republics the decision of the Commonwealths of Independent States (CIS) creation on the basis of above three republics was accepted. It meant their output from USSR structure. The CIS were declared open for other states to participate in it. Belaviezhsky's agreements have been ratified on December, 10 the same year by a Supreme Soviet of Belarus. Disintegration of the USSR became the obvious fact. It was left with the largest republics.

On December, 21 in Alma-Ata heads of eleven former Soviet republics gathered: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmen, Uzbekistan and Ukraine — to sign the Declaration on CIS creation. It marked, the CIS is not neither the uniform state, nor the state structure. The subsequent events had showed CIS as a pilot formation.

Belarus declared the readiness to follow all the USSR international agreements signed earlier. According to arrangements with Russia Belarus has deduced from its territory all strategic nuclear rockets and declared itself as a neutral state.

On March 15th, 1994 a Constitution of Belarus was adopted. According to this Belarus has become a unitary democratic and a social state with the presidential form of ruling and a principles of legislative, executive and judicial authorities division. The constitution guaranteed predominance of Law and person's freedoms protection.

The economic system of Belarus was formed as an integral part of USSR economic complex. Such industrial giants as tractor, automobile, automatic transfer lines, optic mechanical, trunk factories, the chemical and electronic enterprises had been built before USSR splitting to maintain the general needs of USSR foreign export, which made more than 60% of the total production manufactured. The raw material and fuel had been delivering from other regions of the USSR according to the general economic plan. The uniform monetary system was broken up. National money became inconvertible. International and re-

gional transactions between CIS have become excessively complicated, as well as barter exchange was ineffective. Belarus had to solve a problem of Chernobyl tragedy consequences liquidation alone.

Economic changes damaged the social sphere. No funds could be found to maintain kindergartens, nurseries camps constructed in the Soviet Era. In economic development Belarus was moved far back.

Of course, it led to the standard of living decreasing and a galloping inflation, that cancelled the personal savings in banks. Many people were engaged in fine «shuttle» trade. The history understanding was also changed. For instance, the assistants of German invaders were called fighters against Stalin's totalitarian regime.

In 1994 A.G. Lukashenka has won the first presidential elections.

At last, since the middle of 90th, Belarus began to adapt to new market economic conditions.

In 1996 the Republic's referendum passed to support changes of the state symbolic as well as equality of Russian and Belarusian languages. Belarus people rejected the symbolic which was used by «Belarusian police» cooperated with German invaders and fascist armies battled with partisans during the Great Patriotic War.

An effective governmental power was formed in the country. Belarus has determined the way of socially focused market economy building including different forms of property. However up till nowadays about 70% is a state property, as well as an amount of Gross Domestic Product produced.

The national economy is being reformed and transformed to look forward to market approaches in economics and financial activity. Belarus has saved a state property on the largest industrial enterprises to provide them with necessary funding and effective social ruling (for example, a rule of «gold stock»). The development of small and average-size private enterprises to create a competitive economic basis for foreign and home partner has begun.

The main economic partner of Belarus is Russia and its big market. Belarus established neighboring both contractual and profitable relations with Russian regions, having created necessary terms for manufacturing and export production of Belarus enterprises.

Till now the government supervises enterprises and public privatization to observe and follow competitive principles its implementation. It tries to sell the objects of privatization on market price, instead of its balance cost.

The most known enterprises are: cotton factory, the Grodno tobacco factory, a production association «Integral», the Minsk tractor factory, Gomel factory of agricultural machines, Belarusian automobile factory and «Horizon» factory.

In 1997 the national economy reached its pre-independent level of 1990. Beginning from 1994 and up till 2003 it became possible to increase the capacities of a fuel and energy complex through system gas-pipes.

As per expert opinion of United Nations European Economic Commission, Belarus is one of the world-leading country in the field of energy-saving technology's development. A good example is an implementation of transcontinental pipeline project «Jamal-Europe» and an oil pipeline «Friendship».

The new railway station, airport, new branch of underground, national library, second belt road line in Minsk were constructed as per international standards.

Nowadays, Belarus one of few republics in the former USSR where social priorities are still kept: free-of-charge public health services and education, various grants, reduced payment for municipal services, public transport and the other public blessings. Moreover, Belarus has insignificant rates of real wages growth. Salaries, grants and pensions are in due time paid.

An official rate of unemployment in the period of 1994—2003 did not exceed 4,5% that is less, than an average in EU countries.

New Center of oncology and hematology near Minsk, cardiology module of 4th clinical hospital in Minsk, medical — rehabilitation complex for invalids in Minsk, versatile hospital in Brest, Republic Center of radioactive medicine, Oncology clinics in Vitebsk, Bobruisk and Gomel are constructed and equipped by perfect medical facilities. In Minsk and in the regional cities ice palaces and stadiums are constructed.

A school reform providing 12-years term primarily and secondary education is being carried out. State and private universities are passing to multilevel educational training. Higher educational establishments are engaged in new market-demanded specializations: management in business, social technologies, international economic relations, economic and business law and so on.

In 2002 we took the 56th place among 174 countries in the world according to human development index level (UNDP report Year 2002).

Significant events in a cultural life is International Art Festival «Slavyansky Bazaar» («the Slavic market») is held annually in Vitebsk. The idea of the event is to gather the best performer from different countries and to demonstrate to the whole world that genuine of Slavic art has no borders. The key words of the festival are brotherhood, mutual understanding and friendship.

Alongside with the governmental and public funds of mass media an oppositional press is also distributed. However political pluralism should be limited its opposition efficiency, creating and introduction the programmes of social and economic development in the national economy.

Belarus has no territorial claims to neighboring countries so the building its foreign relations basis the principles of equality, openness for cooperation, following the international standards and limited free-trading.

Taking into account the geopolitical position of the country in the center of Europe and its historical traditions, Belarus has preserved its strategic economic partners: Russia, Ukraine and Poland, as well as CIS and Near East countries, India and China.

However such institutions as national currency converting, positive foreign trade balance growth, introduction of Russia-Belarus uniform currency, progressive development bases limited external financing tendency that still remain problematic.

On September, 9th 2001 the second president elections in a history of Belarus took place. An absolute majority of voters supported the ruling President in the first round of elections, having typed almost 75 % voices (in the Gomel region — 92% voices). A.G. Lukashenka was elected as the President of Belarus for the second term. Elections showed the authority of the President and his social-economic approaches efficiency.

Topic № 9 Transnational Belarusian Cooperation: principles, instruments, implementation, models

Geographically Belarus is in the center of Europe. As a matter of fact it should concern to the Central Europe. Nonetheless, a certain division is not only made of geographical criteria, as economically, politically and socially. Europe today represents multivariate space, a microcosm beginning from its high industrial advanced western part to stagnation East. If compared a macroeconomic dynamic in both western and eastern parts the situation will be the following — in 2000 from 46 countries included in a world group of countries with a high human development index 26 states are European.

The Belarus society is still in process of self-identification, search of its substance. It is characterized by presence of significant displays from Europe, transform paradoxes preservation losing consciousness, but with the beginnings of XXI century determinants already.

The question is to definite a place of the country in a coordinates system «East — West» as well as a certain tolerance and friendliness to neighboring regions, people, religion and personal contacts. Despite of it, a significant cross-border cooperation activity in socioeconomic sphere takes place in the western direction only. Belarus has to change and vary the vector of cooperation periodically, especially in terms of EU eastern movement.

Certainly, is proved to consider all inhabitants in Belarus (more precisely 66,9%) kind and nice neighbors of the neighboring countries. At the same time it is necessary to pay more attention on regions that are far from Christian humility and love to representatives of the western civilization. European values and countries are not perceived equally in some Belarusian regions.

2004 is a reference point for the European union (EU) and Belarus, having thre external border with the EU states. After scrupulous preparations, «the European family» will be filled up on ten new candidate-states that presents the biggest expansion in EU's history. The EU will adopt a new constitution to amplify its influence on the continent and on Western NIS. Simultaneously the frontier states are able to render significant influence on macroeconomic dynamics in the regional and cross-border markets of EU countries.

It needed economic and political attention in EU promotion to the East, necessity to care about national freedoms and interests in the frontier countries, an effective system of transnational cooperation and interactions construction.

Nowadays, transnational cooperation of EU and frontier Belarusian territories is submitted by special program actions Interreg3 and Tacis:

1. Institutional and administrative reforms development (effective management support, administrative reform, international obligation implementation, civil society development, consulting services rendering and so on);

2. private business and socioeconomic development (small and average enterprises establishment, bank and finance system development, of private business and privatization support, industrial product research, formation of market relations and investment development);

3. minimizing negative transformation (public health system and services reformation, social insurance, pension system, re-structuring);

4. infrastructure development (transport and telecommunications, boundary transitions, pipeline transport network);

5. rural economy development (grounds privatization , increased access to financial resources).

When analyze the EU expenditure structure to form an effective cooperation instruments with Eastern NIS including Belarus in the terms of economic expansion lets analyze the financing structure of constant annual charges of the EU budget and the budget of Structural funds. The whole charges of the EU budget make 100,4 billion euro annually. From where 11,4% (8,3% + 3,1%) or 11,44 billion euro are enlargement charges. Structural funds charges includes transnational and inter-regional neighborhood programs financing and Interreg make 30,3% or 30,42 billion euro. 2,2% or 66,92 million euro are spent on Interreg3 programs annually to promote frontier and EU countries cooperation as Belarus. Moreover 81,2% of structural budget or 24,7 billion euro make investments in priority transnational problems and international development.

EU process enlargement makes it difficult to estimate an expected economic benefits and regional competitiveness growth in the world and European market that does the use of determined analyze techniques useless, then we use a probabilistic forecasting approaches to estimate an economic benefits with possible errors. So, applying probabilistic approaches it is possible to see the following economic and trading advantages:

1. EU enlargement will provide Belarus the direct access to the uniform, expanded, harmonized market with 450 million of consumers. Belarus, probably can get benefits from the uniform trading rules, custom duties and administrative procedures which will be applied in the whole territory of enlarged Union;

2. Simplification will bring benefits to small and average-size enterprises especially which have larger expenses in trade procedures;

3. The Belarus pure economic well-being, according to experts, will increase approx. on 1,5%, it will also increase the Gross National Product, improve export terms. Belarusian export in EU countries as the Center of European political researches considered to be will increase approx. on 2%, than on 4% in new ten member countries;

4. Strict competition rules of EU, concerning the state grants and the law of companies will be favorable for domestic enterprises to create an equal conditions with the local manufacturers.

However, Belarus, as well as Russia being frontier region, expresses concern on the problems of duties and quotas, in particular as regards the total level of tariff protection in EU will increase after EU enlargement. In some goods, the level of import duties in new member — countries will be higher than now. However, it not absolutely so. The total level of tariff protection after EU enlargement will decrease, actual there is a question of export commodity structure . The present customs average level EU is equal approximately 4% while it is about 9% in ten joining countries.

Undoubtedly, some duties will go up, instead of benefits from the general decrease in a tariff protection level will all over move the certain negative effect for Belarusian goods.

Another problem is quantitative restrictions or quotas and trading protection ways used in EU, that will be applied by new members after connection.

The goods crossed customs clearing when exporting in EU can move free on EU territory without payment any additional transit or other fees that will increase the quantity of the international transportations.

EU Commission suggests neighboring programs valid for external borders of the expanded Union as the first alternative step of cross-border cooperation. These programs will be developed in common by participants from both parties. Neighboring programs will include a wide spectrum of actions, for example, infrastructure project, transport, project of environment preservations, energy, rules of border crossing, electronic communication; investment plans in economic and social sphere, humanitarian actions (such, as a cultural both educational exchange and cooperation), etc. When development of neighboring programs other existing or preparing programs of cooperation will be also observed and analyzed.

The above measures and goals implementation together with the calls of globalization and regionalization, fast rates of technique development, immigration and ageing population, compels Belarus to change dynamically its regional and transnational policy as well as cooperation vectors. The vector policy affected by EU and Belarus is most actual than ever. The reform policy is concentrated on three basic ways: a re-approach policy of the advanced and removed regions, formation a competitive mechanism in transnational cooperation restructuring, creation a uniform network of European cross-border integration and prosperity.

It is known, the joint cross-border cooperation investments of EU enlarged and Belarus (especially frontier regions as Minsk, Brest, Grodno and Vitebsk) initially assumes a certain restrictions. Not being the candidate-country for EU, Belarus cannot apply to high-grade financial and economic support in spite of the fact its frontier regions nevertheless get in sphere economic and geopolitics interests of «Big Europe».

Thus, republican, regional and local level cross-border contacts are necessary to encourage fruitful cooperation, developing an exchange in sphere of economy, culture, social policy, religion and education.

Topic № 10. Belarussian Culture

10.1. Religion.

10.2. Holidays.

10.3. Belarussian architecture.

10.4. Belarussian national clothing.

10.5. Belarussian theatre and circus.

10.6. Belarussian fine arts.

10.7. Belarussian national games.

Belarus. If translated, the name means «White Russia», a tender and poetic name that befits this country in the best way. «White», in this case, means clean, fair and innocent. Bright colors of the Mediterranean region are not typical of Belarus. It does not have the stunning exoticism of Africa or delicate slyness of the East either. Belarus is a country of modest and, one may even say, intelligent beauty. Its quiet charm penetrates into a traveler's soul gradually, through a soft play of the morning sky over the vague horizon line, through the velvet verdure of the vast expanses of the fields, through the overpowering balmy air of a century-old pine-forest, through the tender mooing of cows and sad cries of cranes. The slipping-away beauty of Belarus does not expose itself to everyone. For this you have to stop and feel the surrounding world: try to look into the blue eyes of Belarus, its deep lakes until you feel dizzy, dip your hands into icy waters of a ringing brook, hide from warm rain under a shaggy branch of a spruce... Perhaps, this is one of the few remaining places on our planet where one can see the amazing miracle — the miracle of the untouched nature. It is surprising that right here, in the very center of Europe time seems to have considerably slowed down its pace — the XXI century is raging around, civilization is advancing in strides, yet in Belarus nature remains real, people remain human and values remain eternal. Belarus is an island of calmness in the swirl of seething time, a place of wise harmony of the body and soul.

The historical paradox is that belarusians are one of the most peace-loving nations in the world. Tolerance is their inalienable quality. Yet, alas, it did not help the country to become another Switzerland. Due to its geographical posi-

tion Belarus has always been the battle arena where stronger neighbors clashed. Tiffs of feudal lords, forced introduction of Christianity, raids of crusaders, Mongols and Tatars, inclusion into the Great Lithuanian Principality, then into Rzeczpospolita and finally into the Russian Empire — Belarusian land remembers thousands of bloody battles, fierce fights and wars. Formidable kings and invaders are part of history. Thank God, wars are a thing of the past, too. Only ancient castles and palaces remind us about the stormy past of Belarus. Some of them are being actively restored — for instance, the castle of Mir — a real miracle made of red bricks and looking onto an ancient pond where, as the legends say, uncountable treasures wait to be recovered. But, perhaps, the strongest impression would be left by the castles and palaces that have not been touched by restorers: Khrevo, Golshany, Smoiiany, Ruzhany... Formidable and stately ruins covered with the dust of centuries seem to be still living in their times. Touch those gray stones and feel the rhythmic, never interrupting pulse of history.

10.1. Religion

Belarusians have always been tolerant to other religions. Perhaps, it is so because they have always lived on the boundary between paganism and Christianity, as it was in the X century when the Prince of Kiev decided to convert Belarusians into «true believers» of Orthodoxy and Catholics, like it happened in the times of the Great Lithuanian Principality and Rzeczpospolita or during the USSR era when the country balanced between faith and atheism

10.1.1. Paganism

Before 990 A.D. Belarusian — a mix of several Eastern Slavic tribes (mostly Kryvichi and their branches) and several Baltic tribes (Yatviangians, Litts, Latts) — were pagans in their beliefs. As Slavs have arrived from South to the lands of today's Belarus they have encountered and absorbed the cultures and beliefs of Baltic and other peoples inhabiting the land. There was already a rich Pagan heritage which reveals today through ancient names. Neman (Nioman, Niamunas) — one of the main rivers of the area is bearing the name of Celtic God of War — Neman. Kupala — an ancient God of Water. One of the mysterious peoples completely assimilated by us was Yatviangians. Ancient Belarusian believed in God of Sun — Yaryla, celebrated seasons of nature very much similar to druidic calendar. The cycles of folk songs that were sang at these celebrations still exist. Paganism is still present in popular festivals. The most colorful of them are Koliady Kupalie, Spring Greeting, Dziady.

10.1.2. Eastern Orthodox Christianity

Around 990 A.D. the Orthodox Christianity came from Greece to our land. It has absorbed lots of formerly pagan traditions and used them for it's own purpose. In the first few centuries Kiev, Polatsk and Novgorod were competing in uniting eastern slavs in religious belief. Belarusan have developed their own ap-

proach to Orthodoxy with more interest in human side of the life. Several religious figures in Belarus St. Efrasinnia of Polacak, Kiril Touravski were very influential and even canonized. Orthodox religion is generally more tolerant to other religions than Roman Catholic religion. Such the priests (except high priests) are required to marry. Belarus developed it's own Belarusian school of icon with several renown masterpieces. The Orthodox churches are usually very decorated inside. It involves lot's of sacral magic, which is considered almost equally important Christ heritage as Bible. The idea of spiritual unity of all Orthodox believers mirrored in the compassion and cooperation in everyday life is one of the most cherished. Nowadays Orthodox Christianity is a leading religion in Belarus (about 70%).

10.1.3. Roman Catholicism

Around XIV c. Catholic orders moved into Great Lithuanian Principality. Nowadays the second biggest religion is Catholic religion (about 20%). Franciscans, Bernardins, Jesuits etc. To large extent it was promoted by the Grand Duke who betrayed Orthodox beliefs to Catholic fate to get a throne of Polish king. For the next 600 years it was a struggle between the Catholic and Orthodox church for possession Belarusian souls and hearts.

10.1.4. Unia (Greek Catholic) Church

It is exactly in Belarus and Western Ukraine that the world's unique practice, the Uniate system, when the Orthodox Church cognized the supremacy of the Pope of Rome and catholic dogmas, yet preserved its own rituality and structural organization was operating for some time. Unfortunately, annexation of Belarusian lands to the Russian empire leant liquidation of the Uniate church. Yet, it may o happen that people will recall it now when Orthodoxy and Catholicism are looking for ways of reconciliation.

Many Belarusian like Mileci Smatrycki, Leu Sapega, Grand Duke Mikalai Krystof Radzivil were seeking Union as the way to establish its independent church which at that times meant a lot for sovereignty of the nation. Both Catholic and Orthodox churches have forgotten their real purpose and became inexcusably involved into political games of Poland and Moscow. Nothing changed since these ancient times. Most of the Catholic church is still involved in the polonization of Belarus.

10.1.5. Reformation Church

In XV—XVII centuries Belarus (GLP) was undergoing a unique Renaissance époque with the flourishing arts, sciences, crafts, medicine. It had strong connections with a Europeans. Our philosophers were having correspondence with Martin Luther and other leading intellectuals on the ethical and humanistic aspects of Reformation. Calvinism was becoming increasingly popular at that time. Most of aristocracy were attracted by schools of Calvinist communities

and general progressive humanistic mood. The major figures of Belarusian Renaissance were Dr. Francisk Skaryna, Symon Budny, Vasil Cyapinski. Later protestant communities were suppressed by Catholic Contr-Reformation, and to some extent by Russian Orthodox Church.

10.1.6. Other

The same tolerance was displayed in respect to other religions that existed in Belarus — Judaism and Islam. Nowadays approximately 70% of the population consider themselves orthodox, 20% — catholic and 2% — protestant. In Belarus there are also some communities of Russian old-believers, Protestant churches are mostly represented by the Church of «evangelical faith» and Baptists. There are two acting synagogues and the Islam Mosque is building in Minsk.

Nowadays the religious life in Belarus is very active after 70 years of atheism in USSR. Many young people are finding their spiritual path in Orthodoxy, Catholic, Protestant belief. There many churches restored and new are built. Judaism and Islam still have their roots in Belarus. Some people venture into Krishna's, Buddhism, Neo-Paganism. Significant part of population are atheists. Atheism has a long tradition in Belarus.

10.2. Festivals

10.2.1. Soviet festivals

February 23 — Army Day. On this a Decree of Red Army was proclaimed. There was a military parade in the Red Square, official festivities with giving and receiving different awards etc. Since every man in the USSR has to go through military training it has eventually become a sort of one-way Valentine's Day when women are celebrating men.

March 8 — International Women's Day. No demonstrations on this day. But there were concerts and parties. It has eventually has become a sort of one-way Valentine's Day, when men are supposed to adore women in all possible ways. In highschool boys would give presents to girls on this day, while girls would present boys with gifts on February 23. So these two holidays started with some political cause and transformed more or less into romantic occasions.

May 1 — International Day of Proletariat Solidarity. Usually had a demonstration in each town or city with flowers and balloons. The purpose was to celebrate labor and working people of different professions.

May 9 — Victory Day. Celebration of the Great Patriotic War victory (21.06.1941—9.05.1945). It is celebrated each year around Belarus with the central event in Minsk — the march of Great Patriotic War veterans.

November 7 — Celebration of October Revolution. It happened on October 25 1917 according to an old russian calendar and on November 7 by western calendar. Some years after the revolution, the same calendar as in Europe and America was adopted by decree in the USSR. Anyway, this was the day of a mili-

tary parade on the Red Square and sometimes in the capitals of other NIS. In Minsk as well as in different other capitals former USSR one could see powerful Belarusian militaries, technique, industrial products while celebrating festival in Minsk.

December 31 — New Year's Eve is probably the most favorite festival. It is celebrated pretty much same way as in USA: parties, carnivals, decorated Christmas tree, gifts, champagne, lots of chocolate! «Ded Moroz» (Father Frost) is our own version of Santa Claus. He always arrives on sledges with three horses in it. He is accompanied with his beautiful grand daughter — «Snegurochka» (She is made out of snow and ice, and has to leave North during the summer). Of course during soviet times the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union now Russian and Belarusian Presidents congratulate people on TV, wish happy New Year seconds before the main clock on Moscow Kremlin Tower and Minsk Clock would start beating midnight.

There are many other professional celebration days — like the Day of Aviation, The Police Day, The day of Medical Doctor and so on. There were also ideological dates in former USSR — the birthday of V.I. Lenin — widely celebrated in school. The day of death of V.I. Lenin and others.

10.2.2. Christian Festivals

Christian festivals are mostly devoted to national notices and saints dates. Let recollect some of them: Wednesday on 4th day of Great Fast; Thursday on Easter week (Clean Thursday) The last day of Christ's life before crucifixion; April 11 Antsip — a saint of medicine men; April 25 (Mark) If it rains on this day, then there will be no night frosts anymore; September 1—8 Babina Leta (women's summer) — a sort of equivalent Indian Summer in USA; October 18 (Luka) — a holiday of icon artists; November 22 (Prakop) — the roads are covered by snow; December 4 (Varvara) Rivers get locked with ice; December 24 **Great fast (Kuccia)** — beginning of Kaliady.

The translations of the month names in Belarusian, characterizes the seasons:

Studzen' (January) — «Cold» month.

Liuty (February) — «Angry» month.

Sakavik (March) — «Juicy» month.

Krasavik (April) — «Beautiful» month.

Traven' (Maj) — «Grassy» month.

Cherven' (June) — «Red» month, which could also mean «beautiful».

Lipen' (July) — «Linden-Tree Blooming» month.

Zhniven' (August) — «Harvesting» month.

Verasen' (September) — «Verasok Blooming» month. Verasok is a local plant.

Kastrychnik (October) — «Fires» month. Peasants are burning leaves and grass.

Listapad (November) — «Leaves Fall» month.

Snezhan' (December) — «Snowy» month.

10.2.3. Pagan festivals

«Spring Greeting» — is a cycle of celebrations designed to «awake» mother Earth from the winter sleep which was important for such agricultural people as belarusians. This cycle includes such holidays as «Maslenitsa», «Vialikdzen» (Easter), and others. Each celebration is characterized by specific cycles of «vesnaviya» (spring) songs. The most ancient celebration is «Yur'ia». Yur'ia is in fact christianized name for pagan God-Sun — Yaryla. The Sun-God brings the keys and open his mothers (Earth, Nature) womb — to let out the grass, and flowers, and animals. As usual these holidays are also celebrated by specific ritual food — eggs (symbol of life in most of indo-european cultures), pancakes (circle is an important magical shape - it depicts sun).

Kupalle (Solstice, June 21) — is the most loved and cherished pagan holiday in contemporary Belarus. It is a summer celebration of fertility in the name of a female God — Kupala. By some pagan sources she is considered to be a lunar God, although direct translation of the name is «She Who Bathes». Lately it was renamed into a Christian celebration of a male saint — Ivan Kupala.

Kupalie is the most mysterious of all Belarusian festivals. It is celebrated on the night from 6 to 7 of July. According to popular legends that have existed for thousands of years, a flower of a fern unfolds on the Kupala midnight and the one who finds it will be eternally young and happy. And that person will know the future. On that night young people set off for the forest with a naive, yet romantic hope to pick up this miraculous flower. People moved on a round dance and jump over the fire competing in their deftness. It's an amazingly wonderful and ancient pagan festival. The Kupala night is the darkest one in the year. One step away from the fire and you plunge into absolute night and stars. But what is that little flame glimmering in the depth of the forest? Is it really a fern flower?

It was considered that the plants gathered at this time have particular strengths for curing and magic. Part of these plants were used in food. Some plants were used for magical protection and the wreaths of these plants were put on the walls of the houses to protect against bad spirits. There would be a lot of dancing in karagods, competing in strength. A popular type of magic practiced on Kupalle night was fortune telling. The girls would put their wreaths on the water and let the river carry them. The one that would come to the bank or get entangled with another mean that there will be a marriage. Also it was believed that if you pick the leaf of plantain growing at the crossroads and put it under the pillow — you are likely to find your future spouse on Kupalle night. One could burn a bunch of flux plants in Kupalle fire and chant: «Flux, give birth», to increase its crops. Sometimes to be completely safe you have to drive all your cattle through the purifying Kupalle fire. The purifying power of Kupalle fire was so believed that people would dry out on it the shirts of the sick to cure them, or bring little children close to it to expel all bad spirits.

Dzyady — pre-Christian celebration originating from the cult of ancestors. It is a ritual dinner (a sort of wake) for commemoration of the dead relatives. Usually «Dziady» is also called the day on which the ritual is performed and the same name is used for the commemorated dead persons. Dziady was celebrated during particular days 3—4 times a year (depends on the region). Dziady were celebrated in early spring on «radaunitsa», «maslenitsa» and «siomuha». The special ritual food is cooked for Dziady dinner — «kyccia» (fine barley porridge with berries), «bliny» (pancakes), fried eggs, meat. According to the tradition part of the food and drink is left in a special plate and glass for the dead. At this day families are going to the graveyards to take care of the graves. Sometimes they have food by the grave. Then it is customary to pour some vodka on a grave. Unlike Halloween it's a light holiday of dead commemoration. It does not involve any blood, fake teeth and other satanic stuff.

Kaliady (December 25 — January 7) — pre-Christian celebration of the end of year. It comes from Latin «Calendar», which is the name for the first day of each month. Koliady is actually the celebration of the New Year as per old calendar (prior to 1917) on the night of January 13—14. Traditionally, some people dress to look like animals or fiction creatures, and then noisy companies, holding the depiction of the sun and a nanny-goat's head, begin visiting houses one after another singing original Koliady songs: in return people give them food from their tables and sometimes money. They would sing special Kaliady carols in which the performers greet the house owners, wish them success and plentitude. The youth is playing games, perform in folk theatre plays for public, «skamarohs» would entertain the crowd, play jokes on people.

It is adopted by Christmas celebration by Orthodox and Catholic churches.

10.3. Belarusian architecture

Architecture in Early Ages (IX—XV)

The first cities appeared in IX—X cc as castles and fortresses that were built to protect nearby population from the military invasions. Most of the towns have appeared in the North, North-Western part of Belarus: Polatsk, Vitebsk, Lukoml', Mensk, Orsha, Druck, Zaslau, Lahoisk, Braslau, Shklov, Navahrudak, Vaukavysk. Turau was the only big town in the South at that time. The number of towns has grown sharply during XI—XII cc. owing to development of crafts and economy. Most of the towns were founded on the banks of the rivers or lakes. On one hand it allowed easier transportation by boats. On another hand this made castles less accessible and was a strategic military advantage. In the swampy and almost impenetrable South towns were appearing mostly as the centers of trade. Only in XII—XIII cc. several southern towns (Homel, Chachersk etc) have also acquired some sort of fortifications.

The plans of towns were very stable. In many cases all of the buildings inside the city walls were aligned suggesting existence of a general city plan. Major features were a castle and a trade square outside the city walls. Inside the walls buildings were situated very closely to each other. Most of them were having their own wooden fences. Often 2—3 residential houses and several household buildings were sharing one fence. The entrance to this yard was through monumental gates — «brama». In XI—XII cc traditional construction of buildings was done predominantly of wood. These were mainly one-room houses. The floor was often made out of splitted wood. Some houses were having mica or glass windows. For example many houses in ancient Navahrudak were having 3—4 round glass windows, in which glass plates were installed into special wooden frames. The houses of Navahrudak, Slonim and Biarestie were often having more complex plans and multiple chambers.

The places of religious service were given special attention. These were initially pagan grounds for burning sacrificial fires. They were having wooden idols surrounded by arched fences. In the IX c. Orthodox Christianity has made its way to Belarusian lands. The Christian architecture tradition was brought by Byzantine masters. Churches were build from thin red clay bricks. One of the first churches built is the XI c. Sophia Cathedral in Polatsk. It was built from bricks and natural stone. It was in fact a «shortened» copy of Sophia Cathedral in Kiev and Novgarad — the other two main principalities of eastern slaves of that time. In XII c. the ancient political structure of eastern slaves — Kievan Rus has fallen apart. Polatsk principality was at that time the strongest in Belarusian lands. The political power of this state resulted in creation of a bright and original new Polatsk school of arts. In the second half of XII c. master Iaan of Polatsk constructs a distinctive monument of original Polatsk School of Architecture — a tower-like cathedral of Spaso-Efrasinia Church in Polatsk.

At the end of the XII c. construction of stone and brick buildings was practically stopped because of the complications in political situation. At this time first attacks of Tartars happen in the Southern Rus. All eastern slave lands found themselves in a mortal danger of being completely wiped out by nomadic tartar-mongol hordes. In the beginning of XIII c. in a part of Belarusian lands that were at this time within southern Volyn Principality several brick towers-dungeons were erected for defensive purposes. These towers were built in traditions of early Gothics — red clay bar brick, narrow conic windows and niches. At this time Belarusian architecture has arrived to its Gothic Period.

Architecture in XIV—XIX centuries

The Great Lithuanian Principality (GLP) has been formed in XIII - beginning of XIV centuries initially on the northern lands of present Belarus and southern lands of present Lithuania. The first capital of the GLP was made by duke Mindouh in Navahrudak. The defeat of crusaders under Grunwald (1410) stopped a threat of German invasion and resulted in a period of relative political stability and growth in GLP.

The period of XVI-first half of XVII c. was characterized by a strong cultural and economic development of GDL. 312 towns and large settlements are designated in the map of Makouski made in 1613. Most of these settlements were so called «myaszechki» with a population below 1,500 people. The center of such typical settlement was a towns trading square surrounded by houses of traders and craftsmen. The perimeter of «miastechka» was typically taken by agricultural homesteads. The town citizens were striving for their independence and many towns were awarded Magdeburg Law of Rule in XVI—XVII cc. The privilege of self-rule required citizen to build a town hall with stores, a guarding tower and wax manufacturing shop, a *hotel*, communal bath, a *diner* and other. As a result the center of the town moved from the castle to a trading square.

The architectural styles of ancient Rus were gradually replaced in XIV—XVIII cc. by Gothics, Renaissance and Baroque. An original bi-color decoration was often used when the outcoming surfaces of the buildings were left bare red brick, whereas the inside surfaces of niches and belts were covered with white plaster. Since the end of XVI c. many brick buildings were completely covered with plaster.

The methods of building castles have been changed from «dungeon» type to «castle» type. The later was square in plan with two towers in the opposite angle (castles in Lida, Kreva). Inside different wooden buildings were constructed. On the outside castles were surrounded by the water trenches. The most complex was a castle of Navahrudak. It was built in the place of an ancient Wooden fortress on a highest geographical point of Belarus — The Castle Hill. It had 7 fighting towers, a palace and church inside. Even more fortified was Vitaut Castle (now — «Old Castle») in Hrodna. Most of fortification constructions was done in XIV—XV cc. Such the Orsha Castle was rebuilt in the beginning of XIV c. The early Belarusian castles were having severe and insuperable look — thick walls, powerful trenches and ramparts. The decoration of facades was almost not existent, except some elements of Roman style (for example armature in Lida Castle). The interior of these castles were also dark and gloomy — massive arcs, small fighting windows, narrow stairways inside the walls.

In XVI c. distinct Renaissance features appeared in architecture. It was especially evident in private castles, in which the major defense aspect was gradually transferred to outside structures like ramparts and bastions. The very castles acquired features of palaces with rich decoration of facades and interiors.

Since the towers were built in the weakest points of defense they were distributed not evenly along the walls. Some of the towers had signal bells and special roofed watch tops (see Niasviz castle tower).

In XVIII c. a Rococo style was formed within Baroque style and became very popular in Belarus. Most of the estates and palaces were later built in this style (Hrodna Royal Palace — now «New Palace»; Hrodna August Estate and other). Among most famous architects building estates and palaces in Belarus were: A.A. Henu, I.K. Hlaubits, I.F. Knobel, M.D. Pepelman, I.H. Iauh; polish-born B. Kasinski.

Another typical example of the Gothic style was characteristic to Catholic churches in Central Europe and is often encountered in Belarus since XV c. It has three chambers united in one rectangular in plan building. The bell tower is very similar to a castle tower. These cathedrals were moderately decorated with relief ornamental belts, arched windows and niches.

As for the monuments of cult architecture it was mainly within Belarusian Gothics, Renaissance and Baroque styles in XV—XVIII c. Belarusian Gothics appeared as a result of merging of Russian-Byzantine cross-dome cathedrals and compositional characteristics of local castle architecture. Later western European traditions were added to this style. The fortified churches that carried a defense function were commonly built in XV—XVI cc. These were usually rectangular in plan buildings with 4 towers in the corners and a central dome. This plan was taken from one of the most famous and one of the oldest Belarusian churches — St. Sophia Cathedral in Polatsk.

In XVI c. a reformation movement was widespread in GLP. It has been reflected in appearance of the Renaissance architecture. Calvinist houses were built in Kajdanau, Smarhon, Charnauchy and others. Most of the cathedrals still have fortified defense character. But Renaissance architecture is characterized by appearance of cylindrical buildings, circular or semi-circular in plans. A moderate ornamental decoration is used.

The Contr-Reformation has brought a characteristic Baroque style cathedrals. This style was first used by Jesuits. The first Baroque style cathedral — Niasvizh Cathedral of Christ's Body was built in Belarus in 1587—93 by Italian architect J.M. Bernardoni. The characteristic cathedrals of this style are Farny cathedral in Hrodna, Kleck cathedral, Mikalaeuski Cathedral in Mir. The towers here have lost their defense function and are mostly used as decorative bell towers. At the end of XVI c. competition between different religious communities — Catholics (Jesuits, Basilians, Dominicans, etc), Unites, Orthodox Christians, Protestants — was very strong. This resulted in building of outstandingly beautiful cathedrals.

At the end of XVIII c. — beginning of XIX c. Belarusian lands have been added to Russian Empire as a result of three divisions of the commonwealth of Rzecz Pospolita Polsko-Litewska. This period coincides with the appearance of Classicism in Belarusian architecture. The basis of this was in re-planning of the Belarusian cities by Russian architects in St. Petersburg. The new plans of the cities were geometrically even and symmetric. The principle of regularity especially was evident in those towns that were moved to a new place nearby the old location — built in Classicism style were the estates of arriving Russian nobility who were given lands in Belarus (Homel Palace of Paskevich, Krycav Palace) and imperial government buildings (Postal Office in Polatsk. Classicism was less common in central and western Belarus. Here Classicism was often merged with Baroque style (architects I. Zigfridan, I. Zeidel). The years of 1800—1830 were the period when Classicism acquired a form of High Classicism.

The rusification of Belarus was reflected in significant diminishment of the number of Catholic and Uniate churches built since the end of XVIII c. Mostly Orthodox Christian Cathedrals were built during this time. The cathedrals were built in a simple tradition of ancient Russian churches.

The Architecture of Soviet Period was determined by industrialization of Belarus. 300 plants and factories were built in Belarus only in 1928—1932. The architectural style acquired the features of laconism, simplicity and functionality (see Government Building in Minsk). The unusual volume of construction required new methods. In 1936 a so called Typical Project construction began.

The main direction of city growth was in formation of residential massive on a perimeter. This concept was further developed into idea of micro-region — a self sufficient residential area with multi-store apartment buildings that has its own infrastructure of communications, transportation, central heating and power supplies, commercial center, schools, day care centers etc. These cities within city are very common in Belarus nowadays. In the last years an ecological aspect was given more attention resulting in somewhat more natural blending of the micro-regions with surrounding landscapes — lakes, rivers and parks. The main attention in construction of industrial buildings is given to their function.

After the Perestroika many formerly neglected and empty churches were given back to believers. The above act endangered the monuments even more than during last years of Brezhnev socialism.

10.4. Belarusian national clothing

Clothing is an important ethnic feature of the nation. The origins of Belarusian clothing tradition lie in the ancient Kiev Rus. The moderate continental climate, long winter and mild summer required warm clothing. Fabrics were made out of flax and wool, decorated with printed or embroidered ornaments, or weaved from using threads of different colors. The nobility made clothing used imported fabrics — brocade, velvet — of different shades of red, blue and green. The embroidery with silk was used as decoration. The basics set of male clothing had a shirt with a belt and trousers, female — a shirt (longer than male) and «panova» type skirt (wrapped-around). An outside clothing was usually a «svita» type coat often lined inside for winter clothing. These features were transferred to the clothing in western lands of ancient Rus. The costume of Belarusians conserved it's ties with costumes of Russians and Ukrainians, as well as acquired the features of our other neighbors — Poles, Lithuanians, Latvians and other European nations. The development of Belarusian dress has coincided with the development of new, more complicated techniques of cut, the sophistication of dressmaking in Western Europe, which led to significant changes of European clothing. The shirt received more complicated cut, turn-down collar. Svita was improved by adding «vytacki» (special cuts) in sleeves.

The clothing of magnets (big landlords) and aristocracy was developing within the Western European tradition. It was made out of expensive fabrics, decorated with golden and silver embroidery, precious stones, colored buttons. The important composites of male dress were satin with a coat or caftan on top of it, a long belt from wolf or beaver. The female clothes included different types of blouse, decorated on the sides with ornaments of sobol, marten or fox. The further development of belarusian costume did not had any cardinal changes.

10.5. Belarusian theatre and circus

The Belarusian theatre has a long history. It goes back to rituals and public merry-making which were part of folk festivities and performances of ancient skomorokhs and puppeteers of the Batleika theatre. Moreover the Belarusian «Batleika», a folk theatre, greatly influenced the Russian theatre. P.A. Bessonov wrote: «Thanks to Simeon of Polotsk the court in the times of the tsars Alexey and Peter the Great was entertained by famous plays of Belarusian origin».

The art of ballet became known in Belarus in the second half of the eighteenth century. The richest Belarusian and Polish feudal lords such as the Radzivills, Oginskis, Sapiegas had drama theatres, chapels of singers, choirs and ballet schools at their palaces. Though that tradition died out in the 19th century the development of the theatrical art did not stop. The Belarusian ballet has played a significant role in the development of cultural life of the country. The ballet troupe of the Belarusian Bolshoi Theatre is well-known not only in our country but abroad.

But when we are speaking about the Belarusian Bolshoi Theatre we shouldn't forget about the masters of opera singing. Alongside with the classical operas by P.Chaikovski, D.Verdy, R.Vagner and others, operas by Belarusian composers are staged. Nowadays Belarusian legends have come to life on the opera stage. And «*King Stakh's Wild Hunt*» by V. Solton is a vivid example. The young composer has managed to set to music V. Korotkevich's novel in which legends and real events are mixed up. And besides the music is combined with beautiful and melodious Belarusian language, Solton's opera has become an important event in the Belarusian theatrical life.

The Yanka Kupala Belarusian State Academic Theatre, formely the Minsk Municipal Theatre, is a real pride of our people. It was erected during the Governorship of the Russian Prince Trubetskoi in 1890. Of course, the exterior of the building has been substantially modified from the original theatre. The front was reconstructed after World War II and we must admit that it was not an improvement on the original. The auditorium, richly decorated with mouldings and paintings, had 550 seats in 1890, but facilities were later increased to 700.

It was not until 1906 that the formerly proscribed Belarusian language was heard from the stage of the Minsk Municipal Theatre. In 1920 it became the Belarusian State Theatre and staged the first performance of Kupala's «*Pav-*

linka». Since then numerous premieres have been staged, including works by Ya. Kupala, K. Krapiva, M. Charot, A. Makaenok, V. Dudarev and many others. Great actors and actresses such as S. Stanjuta, L. Rzhetskaya, G. Grigonis and others made their debuts at this theatre. In 1944 it was named after Yanka Kupala. All the performances are given in the Belarusian language and many of them are full of real Belarusian humour, vitality and optimism («Pavlinka», «Marry Now — Never Cry Later», etc.). The plays by the famous foreign playwrights Molière, Shakespeare, Lope de Vega, F. Schiller, H. Losen, translated into Belarusian, are popular with the public as well.

In 1926 the second Belarusian State Theatre was opened in Vitebsk. Now it is called the Yakub Kolas Belarusian State Academic Theatre. It fostered such outstanding histrionic performers as V. Krylovich, V. Vladomirsky, E. Stoma, G. Glebov and others.

The Maxim Gorki Russian Drama Theatre stages masterpieces of Russian classical drama and plays by English, American, French and German playwrights.

Today the Republic has 17 professional theatres. Besides those mentioned above, these are the Theatre of Musical Comedy, the Puppet Theatre, the Theatre for Young Spectators, regional theatres in Gomel, Grodno, Brest, Mogilev, etc.

Circus art is developing in the Republic on the basis of the Minsk and Gomel circuses. The National Circus of Belarus in Minsk was built in 1959. The circus auditorium consists of a ring (13 metres in diameter) and seating accommodation for 1668 spectators, disposed as an amphitheatre. Belarusians have always displayed a lively interest in such spectacles. Shows by jugglers, acrobats, and clowns with performing animals (*skomorokhis*) had been standard entertainments in the castles of noblemen and at city fairs and markets since mediaeval times.

The Princess Radzivil founded on their estates in Smorgon the famous *Academy* for training dancing bears, which flourished from the 17th century to the beginning of the 19th century. The «training» involved a somewhat callous practice of placing the novice bear on a sheet of metal, which was then gradually heated by a fire from beneath, making the bear hop from paw to paw, whilst a drum was beaten to induce in the animal the appropriately rhythmic conditioned reflex.

Performances took place in Cathedral Square in the Upper town of Minsk in the 18th century, and from 1884—1886 the *Nikitin Circus* and other groups performed there in a temporary wooden ring. In 1903 and 1905 the French *Cirque Devigne* and the Italian *Truzzi* troupe visited Minsk, followed by the Italian *Ferrone Circus*, the French *Ecole de dressage* of Richard Ribeau and the famous clown V. Durov with his trained pigs, camels, rats and dogs.

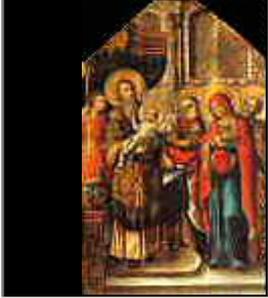
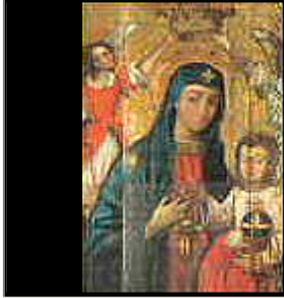
From 1959 until 1974 the Belarusian Circus Company performed regularly under the management of A. Shah and Yu. Averina at the newly completed Minsk Circus, and also on European tour. Since 1975 the Circus has been used mainly by visiting troupes.

10.6. Belarusian Fine arts

Belarusian artists have made an enormous contribution to the development of Slav culture. In the 12th — 18th centuries the most popular genres of fine arts in Belarus were frescos, icon and portrait painting. The Belarusian fresco painting of that period has a number of peculiar features. The traditions of the Byzantic, old Russian and West-European art as well as the presence of local art school can be traced in the fresco details of the Church of the Saviour-Evfrosinia Monastery in Polotsk (12th century).

The Belarusian icon-painting has a number of striking features peculiar only to this particular school which enables us to single it out as an independent school. There is an obvious relationship between iconography and secular portrait painting. The introduction of secular symbolic details into iconography is strikingly illustrated in the 16th and 17th century icons which are exhibited in the Minsk Museum of Arts *St Paraskeva* (1575) and *The Virgin and Child of the Unfading Flower* (1649), where the crowns and flower-sprinkled robes of the Madonna symbolize a mystic union between the material and spiritual world. This is particularly true of *The Nativity of the Virgin* icon (early 17th century) painted by Peter Yevseyevich from Golynets, in which the holy woman is vested in folk-embroidery. The collection of belarussian icons of the 16-18th centuries is represented below:

			
<u>The Virgin Hodigitria of Smaliensk</u> XVI c.	<u>Christ Pantocrator</u> XVI c.	<u>The Adoration of the Magicians</u> XVI—XVII cc.	<u>St. Paraskeva</u> mid.-later half of XVI cc.
Republic of Belarus National Art Museum	The Church of Dormition (1654) Byten village, Brest	The Museum of Ancient Belarusian	Republic of Belarus National Art Museum
			
<u>Virgin Hodigitria The Unfading Flower</u> 1640	<u>The Anastasis (Descent Into Hell)</u> 1678	<u>The Ascension of St. Mary (Assunta)</u> end of the XVII c.	<u>The Virgin Hodigitria of Kalozha</u>
Republic of Belarus National Art Museum	Republic of Belarus National Art Museum	The Museum of Ancient Belarusian Culture	Was located in Kalozha Church (XII c.)

			
<u>The Candlemas Day</u> 1741	<u>The Virgin Hodigitria of Minsk,</u> detail Later half of XVIII c.	<u>The Intercession</u> 1751	<u>St. Nicolas with Scenes from His Life</u> XVIII c.
Central Minsk Cathedral (a former Bernardine church, 1642, Minsk)	Republic of Belarus National Art Museum	Republic of Belarus National Art Museum	Central Minsk Cathedral (a former Bernardine church, 1642, Minsk)

The 16th century portraits created in Belarus were influenced by the Italian and German Renaissance. Secular painting in Belarus took the form mainly of portraiture, much of which was anonymous before the 18th century. Ivan Chrut-sky (1810—1885) is considered to be the greatest figure in Belarusian art of the 19th century. His sentimental portraits and luminous still-life paintings had been assiduously collected by Russian and Polish art-galleries.

An important role in the formation of young artists in Belarus was played by the opening of art schools in Vitebsk (1898) and Minsk (1906).

Among the various genres of Belarusian fine arts water-color painting is of undoubted importance and interest. Unfortunately, a lot of water colours were lost during the war. In war-time the topics of the day were the focus of all art. The water colors of those days are permeated with excitement and people's unbending spirit and readiness to fight against the invaders. V. Volkov, E. Krasovski, V. Kudrevich, L. Leitman, S. Romanov and other Belarusian painters worked then in various genres. In post-war years new peculiarities appeared in Belarussian water-colors painting. The artists tried to come in closer contact with their heroes, to mingle with their subjects and contemporary life.

Water-color landscapes are a particular phenomenon in Belarusian art. Here we should mention V.Tsvirko, one of the leading Belarusian artists. His water-colors *Willows Have Burst into Blossom*, *The Melted Snow* and *April* are superb. The artist has managed to obtain fresh and rich color effects. His pictures are true to life.

Still-life paintings in water-colors are also noteworthy. V. Posledovich (*Still-Life with Iris*, *Red Still-Life*), E. Krasovski (*The Fruit of The Crimea*) and other artists work ill this genre.

The most famous Belarusian artists who paint in oils are M. Savitski, E. Zaitsev and I. Akhremchik. The war theme predominates in their pictures,

though, of course, they also painted landscapes and portraits. M. Savitski has worked out his major theme, that is of partisan movement, which is so dear to every Belarusian. The series *Figures on the Heart* by M. Savitski has become a specific phenomenon in Belarusian art. These thematic pictures are based on real events and reflect the brutal methods of extermination practiced by fascists in concentration camps. Savitski's pictures expose the sinister nature of fascism, and, at the same time, glorify the courage and strength of people fighting against it.

Belarusian graphic art has rich and interesting traditions. Its history is closely connected with the history of the written language. The art of printing in Belarus began in the first half of the 16th century. And the first illustrated books in the Slavonic countries were printed by Francisk Scoryna. The graphic artist has to represent all the beauty of the surrounding world, all the nuances of color with the help of two colors only; black and white, paper being the white background. In contemporary Belarusian graphic art painters belong to different generations and work in various styles.

At the beginning of the 20th century a new trend of abstract painting developed in Vitebsk. Among the artists who belonged to that trend were the world famous M. Shagal, K. Malevich, G. Pen and others. Some of them had to leave Belarus and live abroad. Nowadays these artists are our sorrow and our pride.

No less significant are the achievements in sculpture. Leaving aside the older masters — A. Bembel (one of the creators of The Brest Memorial Complex) and Z. Azgur (his monument to Yakub Kolas has been erected in Minsk), the younger ones are also doing their bit. They are S. Vakar (his expressive and very poetic monument to M. Bogdanovich stands in front of the Opera and Ballet Theatre), I. Misko (his monument to I. Buinitsky is located in Prozaroky), A. Anikeichik (his artistic monument to Yanka Kupala is admired by all the guests of Minsk).

S.Selikhanov (Zaslono's monument in Orsha) together with such architects as Y.Gradov, V.Zhankovich and L.Levin took part in the construction of the majestic Khatyn Memorial. Khatyn is known to the world as a symbol of nazi barbarity. 149 people, including 76 children were burned down alive in that village by fascists during one of their punitive expeditions. Such fearful destiny befell 627 villages in Belarus. 186 of these villages have not come back to life. One of the stones of the Khatyn Memorial bears this inscription: «We have burnt alive in flames. We appeal to all of you: may pain and sorrow turn into courage and strength, so that peace and quiet on Earth may come for ever. May life never again be extinguished anywhere in a holocaust of fires».

10.7. Belarusian national games

1. «Ivanka» This game is played outdoors on some opening — in the yard or in the meadow. «Ivanka» is actually a little rug-doll. It could also be any other toy — a ball, a cube, anything. The number of participants could be up to 20 people. A circle is drawn on the land around «Ivanka» sized 5—6 yards. This

circle is called «forest». In the center of «forest» the square is drawn some 2 feet by 2 feet. It is a «house of the forest man». «Ivanka» is placed in the house and a person is chosen to play a «forest man». The rest of the players are called «swans». The «swans» are flying into the «forest» to save «Ivanka» from the «forest man». The «forest man» can catch «swans» with his hand or touch swans with his magic branch. Caught «swans» are leaving the game. The «swan» who carries out «Ivanka» becomes in his turn a «forest man». The «forest man» can not leave forest. The «swan» can not transfer «Ivanka» to others. The game is over when all the «swans» are out of the game.

2. «Miaciolka» This game looks like a pre-historic hockey. The action takes place on the ice-rink, the surface of the frozen pond or lake (these are in abundance in Belarus). Each participant has a broom — «miaciolka» made of branches and 3—5 pieces of ice (sized 2—3) to 190 people can play this game simultaneously.

A circle is drawn on ice 7 to 14 yards in diameter. Its center has a «mark». Along the line of circle the pits are made on equal distance from each other — 6—8 inches wide and 2—3 inches deep.

The players decide on the order of playing. The first chosen person puts his ice-piece on the «mark» while the rest of the players leave them outside of the circle. They stand by their pits with brooms. The central player pronounces a phrase «It is easier to broom alone than altogether» and strikes his ice-piece towards his pits. At this moment the rest of the players are entering the circle. Each of the players tries to broom the ice piece into his own pit. When the first piece is in the pit, the next player puts his ice-piece on the mark and it starts all over again. After all ice-pieces are spent the winner is the one who has most of them.

3. «Pikar» This game is very popular and is played all over Belarus, Russia and Ukraine. The game is held in a flat ground some 20 yards by 20 yards. One needs a «pika» (Engl.: «lance») — sharpened on one side wooden peg some 10" long, and a longer stick — a bat. The number of participants is 7—10 people.

In one end of the ground the line is drawn — «town». 15—20 yards away from it another line is drawn to designate «hotel». In front of the «hotel», 4—5 yards towards the «town» the soil is loosened — it's a «mark» area. A person is chosen as «pikar». He sticks his «pika» vertically into the soil in the «mark» area. Then the players take shots in line or simultaneously with their bats towards «pika». When «pika» is hit and is outside of the «marked» area all the participants are rushing to pick up their bats. During this time «pikar» is supposed to put his «pika» back into the «mark». After that he is supposed to touch one of the players. If this happens the touched becomes a «pikar» for the next round.

- While pikar is trying to touch the player, other players are allowed to kick «pika» out of the mark with their bats. The «pikar» is obliged to go back and stick «pika» into the mark before attempting to touch someone again.

- The player who has picked his bat has a right to have some rest in «hotel» waiting until other players will kick the «pika» out of the mark.

There are multiple variations of the rules of this game around different regions. I personally remember we were using an empty tin can instead of the «pika» since we played in an asphalted yard. Boy it was one loud game.

4. «Shyla» During the winter time the nights come very early in Belarus. And so kids would be still playing inside with their friends. This is one of such games. A small object is used. Originally an awl (Bel. «shyla») was used. I would suggest to use something less harmful — a tennis ball, for example, or any small toy.

There could be up to 20 players in this game. A «leader» is chosen. He stands in the center of the room. The rest of the kids sit down very close to each other on the floor in a half circle behind his back. The legs are bend and hands are hidden under their knees. One of the players has a toy. The players secretly transfer it to one another. The one who has a toy can either transfer it to someone else, or he could touch the leader's shoulder if he is convinced that the leader doesn't see him. If the leader guesses right who is the person, then they change places. The clumsy kid becomes a leader. There is a variation of the game where the guessed player leaves the game.

The rituals and games were taking place during traditional festivals and celebrations — «ihryshcha» — of ancient eastern Slavic and Baltic tribes that were inhabiting Belarusian lands. In some places these party evenings were called also «bent» evenings («kryvyia») because everything was humorously depicted in grotesque inside-out way. The participants would enact humorous weddings or wakes with a dead guy turning out to be alive («Babior pamior, pashli haranic', azhno ion siadzic'!»), or the bride turning out to be a goat, etc. These shows would be accompanied with songs and dances. Some of these «ihryshcha» are still taking place. The tradition of these «ihryshcha» is without doubt absorbed by modern folk theatres.

5. «Vishan'ka» («Cherry») — the girl stands on the stool having a straw in her lips. Two guys walk in karahod hand in hand around her, entrapping her in their circle. They are supposed to protect the girl from the third guy. This task of this guy is to jump and catch the straw with his lips. If he succeeds — the girl kisses him.

«Hula» — nope it's not a hula-dance. The name originates from «hul'nia» — «game» in Belarusian. Players are divided into two teams — «armies». Each «army» chooses a «big one» — the strongest person. This person throws a wooden wheel or a heavy round stone towards another «army». The other «army» is supposed to stop it as fast as possible and reverse its direction. The game is won when the line is crossed on one of the sides. Boy, does this sound like American football or what!

Ancient Chess in Belarus

Belarusian have been widely involved in playing chess in XII c. Below is several XII century chess figures found by archaeologists in three locations - Slucak, Lukoml' and Vaukavysk:



King, ivory, XII c,
Slutsk, Belarus,
Bielorussian Academy
of Sciences, Minsk



Boat (Rook), ivory, beg
XII c, Volkovysk,
Belarus, Bielorussian
Art Museum, Minsk



Pawn, ivory, beg XII c,
Volkovysk, Belarus,
Bielorussian
Art Museum, Minsk



Queen, ivory, XII c,
Lukoml, Belarus, State
Museum of Belarus

10.8. Lunacharsky park in Gomel

Lunacharsky park is found in old town centre. «Ipatievskaya chronicle» points on existence settlings here, from 1142. The settling belonged to Chernigov prince Igor Oligovich, later to Smolensk prince Rostislav Mstislavich. Archeological excavations guided by regional museum employees, consider people settled there in X—XI c.

During combat march on Byzantine in 907 Kiev prince Oleg had a radzimichy-warrior from settling «Gomi». Gomel is situated on a high hill, where small river Gomeuk falls down into Sozh. A geographical position promoted the development of trade: It was possible to reach Dnepr, connecting Baltic and Black seas.

In 1772 Gomel became a small town in province of Russian empire. In 1775 Catherine the Great presented it to marshal Petr Aleksandrovich Rymianzev — Zadunaisky (1725—1796), a hero of Russian Turkish war. To build a palace Catherine the Great gave him 100 thousand roubles, and sent the collection of pictures as well as subjects of art.

Rymianzev decided to build a stone palace. Wooden Castle of Gomel prince Mihail Chartoriysky was crashed. Main two-stored palace was built in 1793. It was terminated by dome. The name of the architecture is still unknown.

The palace was strict and simple, in Russian classicism stile. The main facade is executed four-columned portico. The building had an oval terrazzo. It was the son of marshal — russian chancellor Nikolai Petrovich Rymianzev, who continued palace construction (1754—1826). He was cultural and well-educated person of that time. Nikolai Petrovich Rymianzev was a collector of an old fellow. He spent much money on works of art. The richest Picture gallery collections, rare statues, a unique library consisted of large number of ancient Slav and Russian books, as well as manuscripts were bequeathed to state.

In 1826 an above grant was taken by the Ministry of Public Enlightenment. Later it was carried to St. Petersburg for institution museum and public library-reading rooms.

In 1809—1819 architecture John Klark on N.P. Rumyanzev's order built Peter and Paul Cathedral (Petropavlovsky Cathedral). The marble monument made by famous Italian sculptor Kanova was installed there on N.P. Rumyanzev's grave.

After N.P. Rumyanzev's death a small town Gomel and palace was sent in inheritance to his brother — an adviser Sergey Petrovich Rumyanzev (1755—1838). He had three daughters. The Law allowed to bequeath the manor only to a senior daughter. So, SP. Rumyanzev has pawned Gomel in the State Loan bank and Gomel palace sold to Earl Ivan Fedorovich Paskevich, prince Warsawsky.

Tower united with palace and burial vaults construction is bound with the name of Ivan Fedorovich Paskevich. Three-stored tower built (1837—1848) on project of the architecture A. Idzikovsky. When rising a flag its indicated a prince in palace. An upper tier was decorated with chimes. On breakaway a broad terrazzo and big grotto were found.

Chapel-burial vault (architecture E.I. Chervinsky) is situated not far from Peter and Paul Cathedral. Decorated five times gilt dome and cross, executed in Moscow church stile of XVII c. An underground decorated with ceramic detail and colored maiolika. It covers domes too. A Chapel's wall is decorated with painting and iconography. Marble plates are inserted in the vault walls with the names of Paskevich family members buried.

In winter 1848 there were oak, maple, elm and hornbeam carried in Gomel park. The following year 300 small and 58 large trees, as well as hothouse plants arrived from Warsaw.

The marble sculptures of philosophers, artists, warriors and poets were situated alongside park lanes and paths with a monument of Paskevich prince in roman cloth as a military leader.

L. Vinogradov, author of the book «Gomel. Its past and present», wrote in 1900: «Splendid park of the prince Paskevich, one of the Gomel noteworthiness is opened for public beginning from with spring time on Thursday and Sunday... with charge per entry about 12 kopeek in favor of fireman society».

Nowadays, Gomel park is considered to be one of the best samples of garden art.

Topic № 11. The great people of Belarus

It should be mentioned that our Belarus has always been rich in talented and gifted people. They all loved their homeland and wished their Motherland better future.

ST EVFROSINIYA OF POLOTSK

It has been stated by some historians that princess Sophia a daughter of Vladimir Monomakh, was the mother of Evfrosiniya. Thus, St Evfrosiniya of Polotsk was a great-granddaughter of St Vladimir and a granddaughter Yaroslav the Wise.

January 5, 1104 is probably the date of Evfrosiniya's birth. Since her childhood princess Predslava-Evfrosiniya — had been noted for her extraordinary wisdom, education and beauty. No wonder that many men were to marry her. But her father had a special hope in marrying off Predslava who was only 12 at that time.

Predslava was against that marriage. When she had come to know about her father's intention to marry her to meet his political and dynastical needs, she decided to flee. She went to the Mother Superior of the convent, who was aunt. After a serious talk with Predslava the Mother Superior decided to admit the girl to monastic vows. Predslava a nun named Evfrosiniya.

Some years later, with the blessing of the bishop of Polotsk she moved into the Church of St Sophia in Polotsk where Evfrosiniya took to translating spiritual and religious books from Greek and Latin into the Belarusian language. She copied these books by hand and gave the money she earned to poor people.

St Evfrosiniya founded a convent in Polotsk named after the feast of Transfiguration. It took place on August 6, 1126.

The convent had a rich library, and then a school for the nuns as well as for the girls of the town was opened. Grandislava, the younger sister of the prioress, was educated here. She took monastic vows with the name Evdokiya. Soon Evfrosiniya's cousin Zvenislava also became a nun with the name of Evprakiya.

Later on St Evfrosiniya organized a monastery for men. This monastery was founded in 1150 in the name of Blessed Virgin Mary's Assumption.

In 1167 St Evfrosiniya undertook a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Besides veneration of the place of Jesus Christ's preaching and the Lord's Tomb, Evfrosiniya's travel through Kiev and Constantinople to Jerusalem had certain ecclesiastic and diplomatic targets. In Jerusalem St Evfrosiniya fell seriously ill. She thanked the Lord for granting her disease in the holy city. For 24 days she had been on the brink of death. After confession and receiving the Holy Communion, St Evfrosiniya passed away on May 23, 1167. She was buried in St Theodosius monastery in Jerusalem.

The sacred remains of St Evfrosiniya rested in the Holy City of Jerusalem up to 1187 when the Egyptian sultan who besieged the city allowed monks to take the sacred Christian objects away from Jerusalem. Since that time the miracle-working relics of the Saint had been in St Theodosius caves of Kiev-Pecherskaya Monastery up to 1910. In 1910 the miracle-working relics were transferred to Polotsk into the Cathedral of the Saviour raised by the Saint where they are up to our days. The Spaso-Evfrosiniya Church in Polotsk, built on Evfrosiniya's request by the architect Ioan, has been reconstructed. Paying tribute to that great woman, the Belarusians restored the Cross of Evfrosiniya and

placed it in the Spaso-Evfrosiniya Church in 1998. It has become one of the most sacred things in Belarus.

In 2000 the monument to St Evfrosiniya was opened in Polotsk. There are always a lot of flowers by it.

DR. FRANCISK SKARYNA

In 1990 Belarusians celebrated the 500th anniversary of the birth of Doctor Francisk Skaryna, the first translator and publisher of the Bible (1517—1519) in the Belarusian language. Skaryna's work had a profound influence both on the cultural development of Belarus and on the Belarusian patriotic movement. Belarusian printing owes its beginnings to Dr. Francisk Skaryna, a prominent scholar and humanist.

Dr. Skaryna was born into a family of a wealthy merchant in the old Belarusian city of Polotsk in 1490. He received elementary education in his native town. From 1504 till 1506 he studied at Krakow University. He graduated from the university with the Bachelor's degree in philosophy and later, in 1512, he successfully passed his examinations at the university of Padua and got his Doctor's degree in medicine. He was a true Renaissance man — his intellectual interests embraced theology, literature, linguistics, poetry, art, law, medicine, botany and printing. It should be mentioned that he was a very educated man. He knew the Polish, old Jewish, Greek and Latin languages. He was the author of a number of admirable Byzantine-rite hymns and prayers, as well as of the first known examples of Belarusian verse.

Scaryna began his publishing activity in Prague in 1517. From 1517 till 1519 he published 19 books under the common title «*The Russian Bible*». The most important of his achievements was the translation of the Bible into the Belarusian language and printing it, first in Prague, and then in Vilno. Skaryna's Belarusian Bible was the second work printed in his native Slavonic language. He wrote little whilst translating the Bible, but in the fashion of the day he hinted much, particularly in his superb engravings. Scaryna was also skilled in the art of heraldry. Like other translators at that time, he wanted «to make knowledge available to people in their own language. He said, «I know the Belarusian language will become a language of books, and not only of speech».

At the beginning of 1520 Scaryna went to Vilno where he founded the first printing-house. In 1522 he published «*The Small Traveling Book* and in 1525 — «*The Apostole*».

Unfortunately, we know very little about the last years of Scaryna's life. It is only known that in 1530 Scaryna was a private secretary and a family doctor of the bishop of Vilno. In 1535 Scaryna again went to Prague where he worked as a Gardener Royal to Ferdinand I Hapsburg, King of Bohemia and later Holy Roman Emperor. It is supposed that Scaryna died in 1541.

In the centre of Polotsk you can see a monument to Francisk Scaryna. There is Scaryna's square in Minsk and the main street of the city is named after

him. Minsk is the seat of the international *Francisk Scaryna Belarusian Language Society*, and the libraries of the city hold a number of rare volumes of his printed works.

THE RADZIVILLS

There were a lot of noble families in the history of Belarus; however none was more renowned than the Radzivill family. The story of the members of this family occupies many pages in the modern encyclopedia of Belarus. The family left its imprint on a wide variety of human endeavors — from public and political life to culture and education. Members of the family were leaders in wars against the enemies of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and later of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Russian Empire. For centuries they had been meticulously collecting and preserving books, documents, paintings, weaponry, and other rare and valuable objects that could fill entire museums. With their own money, the Radzivills built painting shops in Bierascie (nowadays Brest), Nesvizh, and other Belarusian cities. Not only did they influence politics, economics and culture of their nation, but they often did it according to their own needs, aspirations and tastes. History has preserved a lot of names of the Radzivill family. Let us recollect some of them here.

Barbara Radzivill (1520—1551), the Queen of Poland and Duchess of Lithuania was the most beautiful woman of her time. It is written in the chronicles that she was «triumphant in her beauty and love affairs». Indeed, the love she awoke in the heart of the Polish King Zyhimont II August was called «the love affair of the century».

Nickolay Radzivill Chorny (The Black) (1515—1565) filled high and responsible posts in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania: great chancellor, governor (vajavoda) of Vilno (capital of the Great Duchy, nowadays Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania), major of Bierascie (nowadays Brest), Kounia (nowadays Kaunas in Lithuania) and Barysau and administrator of Livonia. Throughout his entire political career he pursued a firm policy of strengthening the sovereignty of the Belarusian state, and skillfully implemented agrarian and economic reforms. Due to his consistent political positions, our state reached its highest prosperity with its public life based on legal principles. As chancellor, Nickolay Radzivill wisely defined new priorities for our state's foreign policy in the 16th century that led to a closer integration with Western and Northern Europe. His efforts and sponsorship led to the establishment of large publishing centers in Belarus. Duke Nickolay Radzivill was fluent in the Belarusian, Polish and other European languages.

His son Nickolay Kristof Radzivill Sirotko (1549-1616), an ardent Catholic, headed the fight against Calvinism and issued orders to burn books published by Calvinist printing houses. At the same time, he exerted every effort to make the architecture of the Radzivill palace in Nesvizh equal to that of contemporary Euro-

pean cities. He was famous as the author of a detailed travelogue describing his journey to Jerusalem, Syria, Egypt and other «exotic» countries and places.

In 1586 Nesvizh was granted the right to an autonomous municipal administration (theso-called Magdeburg right), which added a lot to the grandeur and power of Nesvizh. For over a century, the town had been growing and strengthening in a time of peace. But in 1706, Nesvizh was drastically ruined after one of the war campaigns of the Swedish King Karl XII. For nearly 20 years Nesvizh had to face its sufferings all alone: at the time the Radzivils were preoccupied with « big politics» and lived in Krakow, Warsaw and Vilnius. Only in 1726 Prince Mikhail Kazimir Radzivil (Rybonka) (1702—1762) began to take care of his estate and land again. The historians suggest that it was Prince Mikhail who had rebuilt the town and the castle in Nesvizh. He filled high state posts, possessed the largest (at that time) parcels of land, and was a close friend of King August II (and later, of King August III). He was a powerful magnate and Nesvizh was turned into a center of his estate. In those years, his wife Franciska Ursula Radzivil (1705—1753), who was writing comedies and dramas, established the first Slavic secular theatre in Nesvizh. Dramas, operas and ballets were staged there. Slutsk ballet school was attached to the theatre. This theatre was in action till 1760. That was also the time of restoration of book printing in Nesvizh.

The suite of the Polish King was astonished by the golden bars they had seen in the Radzivil castle. «There were tons of gold, encrusted with numerous precious stones», wrote one of them. By now no one has been able to find out where the treasures had gone. It is supposed that they are hidden in the Nesvizh caches, though during World War II the Nazis sent special search parties with field engineers to look for them.

TADEUSH KOSTIUSHKO

His name is among the names of the world famous fighters for freedom because he also fought for independence of the peoples of North America and Eastern Europe. Our great countryman was noted for his energy, courage and devotion to the ideas of freedom.

Andrew Tadeush Kostiuszko was born in 1746 in Brest region. He belonged to a very old aristocratic family. He got his primary education at a religious school. He left school in 1760 and then continued his studies in Warsaw. After graduating from the University of Warsaw he went to Paris to complete his education. Tadeush Kostiuszko studied at Paris Military Academy for 5 years. It was there where he got his revolutionary ideas.

When Tadeush Kostiuszko came back from France, he could not find any job. So he had to leave his native land and in 1776 he went to North America. It was an English colony at that time and the young officer went to America to fight for its independence from the British power. For seven years he served in the American army. He became a general and was awarded the highest order of the USA. George Washington and Thomas Gefferson were among Ms friends.

Thanks to Kostiuszko's talent the Republicans won some victories, the most important one was by Saratoga in 1777. He became a hero of the USA.

He was rich and famous, but he decided to come back to his Motherland. For 5 years he lived in Sahnovichy, one of his estates in Belarus. He was not wanted at home and there was no job for him for a long time.

Tadeusz Kostiuszko took part in the uprising against Russia and Prussia in 1794. He was injured in a battle, captured by tsarist troops and imprisoned in Petro-Pavlovskaya Fortress in St. Petersburg (the Russian capital of that time). The Russian Emperor Paul I discharged Kostiuszko from prison in 1796. Since that time he had lived abroad. In 1817 Tadeusz Kostiuszko died in Switzerland.

Tadeusz Kostiuszko is a hero of Poland. There is a town named after him in the state of Mississippi, the USA. One of the Australian mountain peaks is also named after him.

Nowadays a monument to Tadeusz Kostiuszko, the brave soldier, national hero of the USA, honorable citizen of France, born on the territory of contemporary Brest region in Belarus can be seen in Lafayette Square opposite the White House in Washington. There are also monuments to him in Krakow, Chicago, Cleveland and Milwaukee.

It is a pity that we do not know much about him, but he was born in Belarus, he fought for its independence and we can be proud of him.

SAPEGA FAMILY

Leu Sapiega was one of the greatest representatives of Sapiega's family. He was a son of Ivan Ivanavich Sapiega (died 1580), the «Starosta» (major) of Daragichyn and «Vayavoda» (general, head of the region) in Padlyassie (which is currently the region of Poland but it is still populated by belarusians). His mother was countess Bagdasa Druckaya Sakalinskaya (died 1584). Leu Sapiega was born in 1557 in the estate of Astravok. He had two brothers: Grygor (served as «Padkamory» (secretary) in Orsha, died in 1600) and Anrej («Starosta» in Orsha, then «Kashtalyan» (treasurer) in Vitsebsk and «vayavoda» in Mscislau; died in 1611). He had also 3 sisters.

Leu Sapiega was first educated at home. Then he had graduated from Leipzig University majoring in philosophy, law and statehood. He had returned from abroad during the kingdom of the glorious Stefan Batory. Sapiega was participating in request of his father and was forced to present it to king Batory. Since Batory was not fluent neither in Polish nor in Old Belarusian Sapiega talked to Batory in Latin. This made Batory to notice a young man and Sapiega received a position of secretary of the GDL when he was only 23.

At this time the Muscovy tsar Ivan the Terrible has started a war against the GDL. Young Sapiega has formed at his own cost a hussar regiment and distinguished himself in the battles at Velikie Luki and during the Pskov siege. In 1548 Leu Sapiega is sent as an ambassador to Moscow. Earlier his uncles Mi-

kalaj Sapega (Vayavoda of Vitsebsk) and Andrej (vayavoda of Mensk). Leu Sapega haven't reached tsar Ivan the Terrible. The latter has died. Sapega has signed a 10 year peace treaty. By this treaty Muscovy kept Smalensk, but left Polacak, Vyalizh and Inland. 16 years later Sapega is sent again to Moscow by king Zhygimont. This times he signs a 20 year peace treaty with Boris Godunov. After signing his first treaty Sapega has received the vast lands of Slonim (1586) and became a Vice-Chancellor of the GDL. Leu Sapega has used his influence to help an election of Zhygimont-August (sweedish prince) as the king of Rzhech Pospolita (kings were elected there by Sojm — meeting of aristocracy). After that king Zhygimont orders to Leu Sapega to compile all acting laws in the state into one Statut that would be obligatory around all state. This work of Vice-Chancellor Sapega was approved two years later by the Sojm in Warsaw under the title «Statut Vyalikaga Knyazstva Litovskogo» — «Statut of the Grand Duche of Lithuania». Sapega has printed the Statut at his own cost in the same 1588.

In the introduction to a printed edition of Statut, and in the speach of Sapega to Warsaw Sojm about Statut, that was also placed in printed edition of Statut, Leu Sapega is exprtessing many progressive and humanitarian thoughts that would be more appropriate to XVIII—XIX centuries. His understanding of law, state power, freedoms and political freedoms are exceptional and could be a lesson to many of todays political leaders in Belarus. Thus in his dedication of the Statut to the king Sapega states that the most law obiding should be a king himself, since it is a king who has the biggiest power. And abusing this power can lead to tyranny and injustice. For his outstanding work Leu Sapega was appointed by king on a highest position in Grand Duche of Lithuania — The Chancellor of the G.D.L. The king who was of catholic beliefs displaced from the Chancellor Kryshtof Radzivil who was famous for his support of protestants. Leu Sapega was born as an Eastern Orthodox. But later he has become protestant just like most of belarusian aristocracy. In 1588 Leu Sapega becomes a roman catholic under the influence of famous jesuit Petr Scarga. Nevertheless Leu Sapega was very tolerant in the questions of religion. He was supporting financially Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic (Unia) monasteries. Leu Sapega was a founder of many of the churches on the territory of G.D.L.

In 1621, at the very heat of struggles between Eastern Orthodox Christians headed by Vitsebsk Orthodox priest Meleci Smatrycki and Greek Catholic (Unia) Christians headed by archibishop Iozafat Kunceovich, Leu Sapega writes his famous letter to Iozafat Kunceovich. In it Sapega supporting Unia as the the independent Belarusian religion warns Kunceovich against forcing people into it. He reminds that the unity of Christians in their beliefs should be made by Christian love, not by arms, not by destroying Orthodox churches.

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