

**МИНИСТЕРСТВО ЗДРАВООХРАНЕНИЯ РЕСПУБЛИКИ БЕЛАРУСЬ**  
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**Кафедра общественно-гуманитарных наук**

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# **ИСТОРИЯ БЕЛАРУСИ**

**Учебно-методическое пособие**  
**для студентов 1 курса факультета по подготовке специалистов**  
**для зарубежных стран медицинских вузов**

# **HISTORY OF BELARUS**

**Teaching workbook**  
**for 1<sup>st</sup> year students of the Faculty on preparation**  
**of experts for foreign countries**  
**of medical higher educational institutions**

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Учебно-методическое пособие содержит информацию об основных этапах формирования белорусского этноса, этапах становления форм государственности на территории Беларуси, месте и роли белорусских земель в геополитических процессах в различные исторические периоды, вкладе белорусского народа в победу над фашизмом, значении и месте суверенной Республики Беларусь в современном мире.

Подготовлено на основе анализа научной и учебно-методической литературы по истории Беларуси, изданной в последнее время. Соответствует образовательному стандарту высшей школы, современным знаниям и тенденциям преподавания курса «История Беларуси».

Предназначено для самостоятельной работы студентов 1 курса факультета по подготовке специалистов для зарубежных стран, обучающихся на английском языке и преподавателей высших учебных заведений.

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## **TOPIC 1**

### **PRIMITIVE SOCIETY ON THE TERRITORY OF BELARUS**

#### **1.1. History of Belarus as a science. Object, functions, sources**

The subject of History of Belarus is the study of Belarusian nation in the process of its development and interaction with other ethnic groups, in all its diversity and specificity.

Functions of history:

- development of national identity;
- function of social education;
- political function;
- function of predicting the future.

Historians learn about the past on the basis of sources. In general, the sources of history of Belarus are divided into the following:

1. Annals are description of year events. The earliest period of the history of Belarus is reflected in the «Tale of Bygone Years» («Povest Vremyannykh Let»), or «The Primary Chronicle». «Tale of Bygone Years» formed the basis of other chronicles. Keniksbergskaya, Ustiuzhskaya, Novgorodskaya, Laurentian, Hypatian and others annals are important for Belarus. There are also local annals: Vitebsk, Barkulabovskaya and etc. The author's position, providentialism (the belief that all things happen by the will of God) are characteristic for annals; in the main political events are described in the annals, but the economy and the social sphere are reflected very poorly.

2. Chronicles are more serious errors than the annals. Bychovets Chronicle and Dlugosh Chronicle are characterized for Belarusian history.

3. Acts are a political document of political, economical, juridical character. The largest number of acts is combined in the «Lithuanian metrica», which is stored in Vilnius and Belarusian archives.

4. Inventories are agricultural documents. There are fixed income, taxes paid by farmers, etc.

5. Memories (written correspondence, memoirs).

6. Archaeological sources. They had a particular importance in preliterate period.

#### **1.2. Stone Age in Belarus (before 3000 BC)**

- The period of 100–10 thousand years ago was the period of the Paleolithic.
- 45–37 thousand years ago the glacier moved up to the level of modern Orsha. By this time the first findings of tools were in Belarus (scrapers under Svetilovichi in Bychov district).

- 27–25 thousand years ago the glacier retreated; southern Belarus was no longer covered by ice. At this time the first person camps were recorded.

- People camp in Yurovichi (Kalinkovichi district) was in 24–22 thousand years BC.

- Camp near the village Podluzi Checherski district was in 22–20 thousand years BC.

There were set-asides of flint. The multi-chamber houses were a length from 5 to 10 m, a width of 3 m. Dog bones were found in Yurovichi. Axes, knives, scrapers, harpoons were also found here. Churinga (ornamented platelets) was discovered. This was possible a primitive form of religion. People of that time called the Cro-Magnons.

- The period of 9–5 thousand years BC was the Mesolithic period. 100–160 camps were marked in Belarus. As a result of productivity and development life expectancy was increased (until 25 years). Man inhabited areas where there was a little of flint. As a consequence there were microliths (a small stone tool usually made of flint or chert) and composite labor tools. At this time, bow, spear, dart were widely distributed and dogs were domesticated by people. Grinding stones were appeared.

- The period of 5–3 thousand years BC was the Neolithic period. It characterized by the simultaneous existence of an element in the productive economy (agriculture and animal husbandry), the emergence of new methods of processing stone and appearance of pairing family. Belarusian Neolithic feature was that, unlike other regions of the Belarusian territory, it was inhabited not so thick, so throughout the productive economy did not displace appropriate. Appropriating economy (hunting, fishing, gathering) was a major, and producing was optional.

On the territory of Belarus in the Neolithic period more than 800 camps were marked. There was weaving.

### **1.3. Bronze and Iron Ages in the Belarusian lands**

The Bronze Age (3-1 thousand years BC).

During this period Indo-European tribes of the Corded Ware were inhabited on the territory of Europe. Belarus formed cultures:

- a) North-Belarusian (left by Finno-Ugrians, no signs of the productive economy);
- b) Middle-Dnieprovskaya (mainly cattle breeding, agriculture was an auxiliary);
- c) Vislonemanskaya (people knew the productive economy). At this time patriarchy came to replace the matriarchy.

VIII c. BC was the beginning of the Belarusian Iron Age. Iron was invented at the turn of 2–1 thousand years BC in the Middle East, the Caucasus. In Belarus iron was penetrated from Central Europe and was distributed with Milogradskaya culture (VII–II c. BC).

South-east of Belarus and the adjacent part of modern Ukraine were occupied with Milogradskaya culture (VII–II c. BC). Monuments were presented the unfortified (villages) and fortified (fortress) settlements, where homes were found: dugouts, huts and ground construction in 12–16 m<sup>2</sup>, i.e. for one family. The dead were buried in kurgans (or ancient graves) or underground tombs for

ritual burials. Ethnicity of «milogradtsev» remained controversial, either Slavs or Balts, there is a version about their proximity to the Scythian population.

In III–II c. BC in the region previously occupied by «milogradtsami» monuments of Zarubinetskaya culture were spread, which were similar to Milogradskaya. There were villages and towns, which were placed huts, the dead were buried according to the rites of cremation in the ground graves. Culture existed before the III c. AD. Ethnicity was solved in two ways: Slavs or Balts.

#### **1.4. The Slavs on the territory of Belarus. Origin, resettlement, lifestyle**

Most scientists believe the ancestral home of the Slavs between the rivers Visla and Oder. In V c. AD in central Europe settling of German tribes started who exercised pressure on the Slavs and they in turn invaded in eastern Europe. Three tribal unions settled on the territory of Belarus.

Frontier VI–VII c. AD the territory of the northern and central parts of Belarus were occupied by Krivichi. Origin of the name is treated differently: from proper names («Kriv», «Krivo-kriveyta»); from the word «relatives by blood» (russian equivalent «krovniy»); on uneven terrain («curvature»).

In VII c. AD on the territory of the southern and central parts of Belarus Dregovichy were settled. The most common version is that the name comes from the word «Drygva» — swamp. Another view is from a proper name («Drag», «Draguvit»).

At the turn of VII–VIII c. AD the south-eastern Belarus Radzimichi tribes were inhabited. As mentioned in the annals, the name comes from the name of its own — «Radim».

## **TOPIC 2 BELARUSIAN LANDS IN IX-XVI CENTURIES**

### **2.1. The first feudal states on the territory of Belarus**

The first mention about the city of Polotsk was in 862. Polotsk immediately fell under the influence of the state of Rurik, who united northern Rus. The first known Polotsk prince was Rogvolod.

After the death of the Grand Duke of Rus struggle began for the Grand buffet. So, after the death of Kiev prince Svyatoslav the struggle was between his sons. In this struggle Polotsk also participated. In 980 march of Novgorod prince Vladimir marked to his brother Kiev prince Yaropolk. On the way to Kiev, Vladimir went to Polotsk and wooed the princess Ragneda (he needed an ally). Ragneda refused, and Polotsk was taken. Rogvolod and his sons were killed and Ragneda was forced to marry. Later Vladimir defeated Yaropolk and became the prince of Kiev.

Afterward Vladimir sent Ragneda with her son Izyaslav to Polotsk to reign, and the second Yaroslav's son was made Novgorod prince. With this step he

contrasted two brothers because of Polotsk and Novgorod were the same economic interests.

After the death of Kiev prince Vladimir in 1015 the situation in Rus was changing. Polotsk prince Bracheslav Izyaslavovich (1003–1044 years of the reign) helped Novgorod prince Yaroslav to become the Kievan prince. After the Bracheslav's death his son Vseslav Bracheslavovich nicknamed «the Magician» (1044–1101 years of the reign) became prince. Vseslav began to struggle for leadership in Rus which was ruled by a triumvirate of Yaroslaviches (sons of Yaroslav the Wise).

In 1065 he made a troop to the Pskov. In 1066 he ravaged Novgorod. In response Yaroslaviches led the war against Vseslav. In 1067 the battle near the river Nemiga occurred, during which Vseslav the Magician was captured and imprisoned in Kiev. In 1068 in Kiev the uprising of citizens was, in which Kiev prince Izyaslav was banished. And Vseslav was released and put on the Kiev throne and he governed the principality for 7 months. In 1069 Izyaslav captured Kiev, Vseslav fled to Polotsk, which was also captured by Izyaslav. In 1071 Vseslav regained Polotsk. After the death of Vseslav the Magician Polotsk lands were divided into a number of principalities: Polotsk, Minsk, Izyaslav, Vitebsk, Drutsk, Logoisk.

#### *Political structure of Polotsk.*

There was a princely-veche system. Polotsk was formed as a confederation of internal autonomies. This was due to the fact that in many cities their own dynasties were formed. And Polotsk didn't have enough power to keep this large area under control — this was the reason that Polotsk before other principalities began to break up.

#### *Principality of Turov.*

The first mention of Turov (the first prince - the legendary Tour) was in 980. History of Turov land was very closely connected with the history of Kiev. The eldest sons of the Kiev prince were very often on Turov throne (that were under the control of the Grand Duke).

At the beginning of XII-half of XIII Turov land was fragmented into a number of principalities: Turov, Pinsk, Slutsk, Dubrovitsa.

Interestingly, in contrast to Polotsk, where there was only prince, in Turov both prince and posadnik (was the mayor in some Slavic cities or towns) were.

## **2.2. Creation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the activities of the first Grand Dukes**

Causes of creation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania:

1. German and Tatar aggression caused consolidation processes of principalities.

2. Folding of a unified economic complex in Poneman and Balts' achievement to level of development of the Slavs.

Center of creation of the state was not chronicled Lithuania but Novogrudok. In the 40s of the XIII century in Novogrudok Duke of Lithuania Mindovg became prince. At the same time there was aggravation of relations between

Novogrudok and Galicia-Volyn principality. The series of military conflicts passed through. In 1253 Mindovg was baptized by the Catholic model. In 1260 Mindovg broke large formations of German knights near the lake Durba. In 1263 he was killed.

Trenyata (1263–1264) became prince. He killed his opponent on the throne the Grand Duke of Polotsk Tovtivil, but soon he was put to death by people of Mindovg's son Voishelk.

Voishelk (1264–1267) won Nalshany and Dyavoltu. He was killed. In the history he became as the first monk, who became governor of the state.

Shvarn (1267–1270) was son of Galicia-Volyn prince Daniel. It can be considered that in this period Novogrudok principality was in vassal dependence. Opposition appeared. Shvarn was killed.

Troiden (1270–1282) fought with Nalshany princes. In 1277 he crashed combined troops of Tatars and Russian princes near Grodno and Slonim. In 1278 he defeated the Livonian knights. In 1281 he took Dinaburg Fortress from the Crusaders, conducted military operations with Polish princes. After his death the struggle for power on Novogrudok throne began, which was characterized by frequent changes of princes. The relative stability occurred during the reign of Duke Viten.

Viten (1293–1316). Biethnicity Balto-Slavic state formed during his reign. The population began to be called Litvin (citizen of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania). Viten introduced national coat of arms «Pahonia». In 1307 Polotsk was included in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The term «Novogrudok principality» was used for the last time in 1314.

Gedemin (1316–1341). In 1323 he created the new capital in Vilnius (Lithuania). During the reign of Gedemin the Grand Duchy of Lithuania increased by almost 2 times. This was facilitated not only successful military operations of principality, but also a policy that Gedemin conducted in relation to volunteer joining territories. Those lands that voluntarily joined to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania retained local dynasty, had the right to withdraw from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, did not pay tribute to the Golden Horde. Taxes were collected from these areas irregularly. Therefore, the most territory joined to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In 1331 Duke won a major victory over the Crusaders near the river Akmyane.

In 1341 during the siege of the German fortress in city Baerburg Gedemin died. His eldest son Jevnut (1341–1345) became prince. But he was soon ousted from the throne by younger brothers Algerd and Keistut. Keistut recognized the Grand Duke of Lithuania and Russian to Algerd, but Algerd — the Grand Duke Zhemoisik to Keistut. In the state the special kind of duumvirate established, which was responsible for Algerd east direction, and Keistut for western. The boundaries of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were expanded. This was due to the weakening of the two rivals of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania: The Golden Horde and Moscow. Battle of the River Streva with the Crusaders was in 1348, which was not successful either sides.

Battle of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Horde in the Blue waters was in 1362. 20000th Tatar army troops were smashed by army of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. After these events Ukrainian lands were included in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In 1368, 1370, 1372 Algird made successful campaigns against Moscow and added Smolensk, Bryansk and Chernigov-Seversky lands.

In 1377 Algird died. Before his death he appointed by the prince Jagailo (1377–1392). His eldest son Andrei of Polotsk disagreed and he started the armed struggle, but was defeated. Following these events, the fight began between Jagailo and Vitavt with Keistut. As a result of this struggle Keistut was killed, and Vitavt subsequently received in the reign of Grodno, Brest and Troki.

### **2.3. Initiation of the Union of Krewo**

Reasons: in Poland old-aged King Ludwig was on the throne that had no sons, but only 2 daughters. The eldest was married with the Elector of Brandenburg. Polish Sejm (*a gathering or diet, assembly*) decided that the her will be husband of youngest daughter Jadwiga. The offer was made to the Lithuanian Grand Duke Jagailo, as the Polish shlachta (*a legally privileged noble class with origins in the Kingdom of Poland*) seduced rich lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Under the terms of the union Jagailo was to spread Catholicism.

In turn Jagailo needed an ally for approval of its power in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (confrontation with Vitavt). After the signing of the Union part of the Lithuanian nobility headed by Vitavt began an armed struggle against it. As a result, in 1392 Ostrava agreement was signed by which Jagailo recognized Vitavt as the Grand Duke of Lithuania, and he only remained King of Poland.

Thus, the association of states did not take place.

### **2.4. The political situation in the second half of XIV – the middle of XV centuries**

After the Ostrava agreement Vitavt became the Grand Duke, but without the right to transfer the throne by inheritance.

In 1399 the joint army of Vitavt and Tatar khan Tahtamysh suffered a major defeat on the river Vorskla from Mongol-Tatar troops.

In 1401 the Pact of Vilnius and Radom was signed in which the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Poland concluded a foreign alliance.

The Great War of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Poland with the Livonian Order was in 1409–1411.

On July 15, 1410 there was the Battle of Grunwald. United army of Jagailo and Vitavt defeated 40-thousand army of the Crusaders. After this battle the threat of the Teutonic Knights was abolished and in 1447 the Grand Master recognized a vassal of the King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania Kasimir IV.

In 1413 Gorodelsky Privilege was released by which the Catholic shlachta of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania received extensive rights. Orthodox aware didn't have these rights. Confrontation planned.



In 1430 Vitavt died. Svidrigailo (1430-1432), younger Jagailo's brother, seized the throne. Svidrigailo became to involve in the management Orthodox aware. This was angered by the Catholic political elite. Conspiracy matured. On the night of September 1, 1432 there was an attempt. Svidrigailo fled to Polotsk. Since the civil war started in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In Polotsk Svidrigailo created the Grand Duchy of Russian but Lithuanian Grand Duke Sigismund Keistut became. The war lasted from 1432 to 1436. In 1435 Battle of Vilkomir held. Sigismund won and in 1436 he restored the unity of the state.

Sigismund was killed in 1440. His youngest Jagailo's son Kasimir IV (1440–1492) became the Grand Duke. From 1447 he was also King of Poland. During Kasimir's reign of large-scale wars was not conducted.

Privilege, which legally fixed the economic and political rights of feudal on the land ownership and the trial under the dependent population, was accepted in 1447.

In 1468 the Kasimir's Code was adopted which established a single state for all kinds of punishments for crimes and forbade lords to take fugitive peasants. Edition of The Kasimir's Code was legalization of serfdom.

## **2.5. The state organization of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania**

At Grand Duke of Lithuania the Lithuanian Council of Lords (rada) existed that consisted of the most prominent representatives of the Lithuanian magnate families, as well as bishops, marshals and treasurers. In the beginning it wore a consultative nature, but after the decrees in 1447 and 1492 it became a legislature.

A bicameral Sejm (diet, assembly) gradually formed. Upper chamber was the Lithuanian Council of Lords (rada) or Rada Polish landowners, the lower chamber was Seimas (was an early parliament in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania) where elected for 2 noblemen (shlachtich) from powiat (is the second-level unit of local government and administration, equivalent to a county, district or prefecture).

Sejm solved the major issues of public life: the election of the Grand Duke, relations with other countries, the issues of war and peace, the establishment of taxes and regulation legislation. The power of the Sejm has risen steadily, the role of the prince fell. Powiat and voivodeship sejmik (the name of various local parliaments) also acted. Power was exercised by the voivode (was a Slavic title that originally denoted the principal commander of a military force (warlord)), starosta, namiestnik (representative of Prince). The whole territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania consisted of 13 provinces, of which 8 were in Belarus: Brest, Vitebsk, Minsk, Mstislavl, Novogrudok, Polotsk, Vilna, Troki.

## **2.6. The border wars of the late XV – beginning of XVI centuries**

At the turn of the XV–XVI centuries Moscow principality increased sharply. One reason of this was the liberation of Moscow from the Tatar-Mongol subjection. During this period Moscow began to act as a protector of all Orthodox. Orthodox lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania declared native Russian, i.e. Moscow.

Conspiracy of Orthodox nobility in Kiev was in 1481 which was discovered and suppressed by Kasimir IV (they wanted to join to the Moscow).

In 1500–1503 the war was with Moscow. Eastern Belarus was ruined. The victory of Moscow was under Drogobuzh. Russian troops besieged Smolensk, but it was not taken. In 1503 peace was concluded. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania lost some areas (25 cities, including Gomel).

In 1507–1508 also military operations were conducted which ended without results for opposing sides.

The rebellion of prince Michael Glinski which escaped in Moscow was suppressed in 1508.

The new war was happened in 1512–1522. Russian took Smolensk and went deep into the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1514. Military operations were conducted in the Minsk district. On September 8, 1514 Battle was near Orsha, where Russian troops were defeated (80 thousand) by troops of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (35 thousand) headed by the famous Belarusian commander Ostrozhsy. But in the future success accompanied to Moscow. By the Pact, signed in 1522, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania deprived Smolensk lands. Since that time in Eastern Europe Moscow principality began to dominate and later it became kingdom.

## **2.7. Development of culture**

*Activities of Euphrosyne of Polotsk (1104–1167 or 1173).*

She was the first woman in Rus who was canonized by the church, granddaughter of Vseslav the Magician, in her youth she took monastic vows. She founded a convent and here opened a school for children. Euphrosyne also founded the monastery. In 1161 by her order a jeweler Lazar Boksha made cross in 51 cm of length of wood, which was covered with gold plates. It has been 20 images of saints. Euphrosyne presented this cross to Saviour (Spasskaya) Church of convent.

*Cyril of Turov (1130 – after 1182).*

He was from a wealthy family. In 1169 he became bishop of the Eparchy of Turov. He developed a style of solemn ecclesiastical eloquence. His work was the highest achievement in the ancient Russian territory in the genre of oratory. He wrote sermons, story-parables, prayers, canons.

*Clement Smolyatich.*

From 1147 to 1154 he was metropolitan in Kiev. He was the famous writer and thinker of his time. His work «Message to presbyter Thomas (Foma)» was extant. In this work there were Belarusian words syabry (friends), lyada (place deforestation and forest burning out), pozhni (meadow), zlodzey (thief).

Among the representatives of the European Renaissance rightful place took East Slavic and Belarusian humanist, the first printer and enlightener, native of the ancient Polotsk Francisk Skaryna (about 1490–1551).

Skaryna became a doctor of sciences twice. First he received a bachelor's degree in Krakow. Then in 1512 he successfully passed the external (without

training) examination for the degree of Doctor of Medicine at the University of Padua (Italy). His portrait, created in the middle of the XX century, is in the so-called «hall of forty» — among the 40 portraits of famous European scientists who came out of the walls of the University of Padua. Skaryna had also a degree of Doctor of Liberal Sciences.

On August 6, 1517 Skaryna was first among the Eastern Slavs who published in the Czech city Prague the book — the Bible. He translated the Bible into the language of churches in Belarusian edition, more available to the common people. Skaryna published 20 books of the Bible in which contained his prefaces and epilogues.

Skaryna's publishing activity after Prague continued in Vilnius where he organized the printing house and in 1522, 1525 he published two books: «The Little Travel Book» and «The Apostol».

Skaryna's activity for that time was a civil (vital) feat. Printed by him the Bibles violated the canons (rules) that existed in copying church books: they contained texts from the publisher and even engraving with his image.

Believe that Symon Budny was follower of Skaryna. In 1562 in Nyasvizh he published the first book in Belarusian language «Catechism» on the territory of Belarus and also the book «On the justification of sinful men in front of God».

Presumably in 1570 Vasil Tyapinsky published with his own money in his family estate Tyapin «Gospel» in Church and Old Belarusian language.

In 1588 in Vilnius printing house, based by P. Mstislavets, at the expense of the Belarusian printers brothers Mamoniches, was published Statute of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania 1588 in the Old Belarusian language.

In 1619 in the town Evye (Territory of modern Lithuania) was published grammar of Meletius Smotritsky. It was a textbook in Church Slavonic language for all East Slavic population over XVII–XVIII centuries.

In 1631 in printing house in Kuteino famous Belarusian enlightener Spiridon Sobol published «Alphabet book».

Founder of travel literature is considered one of the representatives of the magnate race of Radziwill, Nicolas Radziwill Black's son Nicolas Krzysztof nicknamed «Orphan». In 1601 in Prussia diary of travelling of Nicolas Krzysztof Radziwill Orphan was published written during his travels in Egypt, the Middle East in the holy places (Palestine, Jerusalem). «Walking» of Orphan was the first in Belarus scientific and popular geographical edition and only up to the XIX century was guide to the Middle East for the people of the Rech Paspalitaya.

In the XVI century publicist (from lat. — «public») socio-political literature was developed. This literature included Skaryna's prefaces and epilogues, «Dyyaryush» («Diary») of writer Aphanasiy Filipovich, «Trenos or cry of the Eastern Church» was a literary work Meletius Smotritsky written in the form of crying in response to enforced introduction of Uniate and pogrom of Orthodox churches.

A native of the Belarusian land Nicolas Gusovsky (1470? – about 1533) became representative of Latin poetry. As part of the delegation to the Grand

Duchy of Lithuania to Pope (1520–1522), he wrote in Latin extending «the hymn of the fatherland» — the famous poem «Song of the Bison». It was devoted to describing scenes of hunting on bison in the Bialowiezha Forest, and also time of reign of Lithuanian Grand Duke Vitaut. The poem was published in 1523.

The education system in Belarus was represented by primary schools at the Orthodox brotherhoods and Protestant cathedrals; school at the Catholic order of Franciscans, Bernardine, Augustinians; Jesuit Collegium, as well as the oldest educational institutions in the territory of Belarus and Lithuania — Vilnius Jesuit Academy (1579), which had university status.

### **TOPIC 3**

#### **BELARUS IN RECH PASPALITAYA (RP)**

##### **3.1. The Union of Lublin in 1569**

The Union (1385) has not led to the unification of the Polish and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Then other unions were signed repeatedly, but existing acts did not have vital force. However, during a joint legal existence prerequisites were for rapprochement the Grand Duchy of Lithuania with Poland.

The reasons for signing the Union of Lublin:

1. Internal. By this time the nobility of Poland occupied a dominant position in the state, it directly affected the internal and external policies of the government. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania magnates played the major role. Therefore by combining the Belarusian shlachta wanted to achieve the rights of the Polish nobility.

2. External. Livonian War (1558–1583). This war was started by Russian Tsar Ivan Grozny («the Terrible») for access to the Baltic Sea against the Livonian Order. In 1561 the Grand Duchy of Lithuania entered the war (Livonian Order was under the protectorate of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania). In 1562 Ivan the Terrible dealt a blow to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. On February 15, 1563 Polotsk was taken after a 3-week siege and the offensive unfolded deep into the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The war became protracted. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania needed an ally.

On January 10, 1569 Lublin started a sejm. It lasted 6 months. On March 1, 1569 a large part of the Lithuanian delegation left the meeting dissatisfied with the proposed conditions. Then the Poles with the remnants of the Lithuanian delegation proclaimed the union. In addition, by the order of the king the territory of Ukraine which was part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania departed to Poland. Magnates of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were afraid to fight on two fronts: with Poland and Moscow principality, and on July 1, 1569 the Act of Union of Lublin was signed. Since that time, both states were a single entity. The State called Rech Paspalitaya. The head of this state had the title of «King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania and the Russian». Money was general, the

boundaries between states were abolished. Lieges had the right to property throughout the state. A single sejm was created. But each side has retained its forces, laws, administrative staff, court.

### **3.2. Political system of Rech Paspalitaya**

Legislative power in the state had a bicameral Sejm. It consisted of the Senate (rada) and deputative embassies hut (chamber of deputies).

Embassies hut was the lower chamber (up to 200 people), elected for 2 noblemen (shlachtich) from powiat. Sejm was going by king every 2 years. 2 times in sequence it was in Warsaw, then 1 time was in Grodno (from 1673) where mainly considered issues relating to the shlachta. Resolution of the Sejm had to be unanimous — the principle of Liberum Veto (from 1652). Most of people understood the harmfulness of this principle, but in the elimination of its shlachta saw the infringement of their rights. With 55 last Sejms in Rech Paspalitaya only 7 passed without obstacles.

At the head of the executive power a king was, but neither the king during his life or the Sejm during the life of the king couldn't elect a successor. After the death of each king elective anarchy began which lasted from a few months to several years (1572 — death of Sigismund II Augustus and up to 1573 — without king). Rights of king was insignificant: to assign and collect the Sejm, to appoint to senior positions, to maintain contacts with other countries. All the king's life was under the control of the Sejm.

Shlachta gave directions taxes, distribution of public lands, coinage, the right of amnesty. Since 1669 the king lost the right to abdicate. King became the property of the state.

Each large magnate had its own servitor shlachta (army). All land of shlachta were free of state taxes and duties. Duties of the shlachta to the state were only voluntary.

### **3.3. The Union of Brest in 1569**

After the Union of Lublin Catholicism was officially declared the state religion. Orthodox was not prohibited, but not encouraged. Relations were more strained. Many passed from Orthodoxy to Catholicism (mainly the tip of the Orthodox clergy), also struggle with Orthodoxy was seen as a struggle with Moscow.

In 1586 the king Stefan Batory died. Sigismund III Vasa became the new king. He was an ardent Catholic. The idea of the union was proposed. Key points:

1. Uniate church must obey the Pope.
2. Uniate Church should recognize the basic canons of Catholicism.
3. Orthodox rites remained.
4. Church services could lead to the Church Slavonic and local languages.

In 1595 union was approved by Pope Clement VIII. In 1596 in Brest the church council was convened which immediately split into two parts: the sup-

porters and opponents of the union. After the Metropolitan of Kiev Rogoza with his supporters defected to the Catholics, union was signed.

### **3.4. Wars in the middle of XVII centuries**

#### *Antifeudal war 1648–1651.*

This was movement of the peasantry and burghers for economic, estate and religious rights. External catalysts for the people's movement in Belarus was an action of Cossack detachments from the Ukraine, and also Russia's actions aimed at the acquisition of the Belarusian Orthodox population sympathies to the king — «defender» of their rights and interests.

In 1648 Bohdan Khmelnytsky revolted Cossacks in Ukraine. In May, 1648 he won a victory near Yellow Waters and Korsun. As the consequence of this riots were in the south of Belarus. The troops of Cossacks led by Golovatskiy, Golota, Nebaba and others came here to support.

In the summer of 1648 Gomel, Loev, Chechersk, Bragin, Mozyr, Cherikov, Rechitsa, Bobruisk were in the hands of the Cossacks.

Growth of Cossack units was due to the Belarusian peasants.

By order of the king the new shlachta of “national troops” began to form.

In the autumn of 1648 troops of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania took the offensive (the commander of Janusz Radziwill). Pinsk, Brest, Cherikov and others were taken.

In the first half of 1649 troops of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania took under control of the south of Belarus.

On July 31, 1649 the major battles of the war took place under Loev. Troops of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were victorious, the Cossacks retreated, but did not let the foes in Ukraine.

On August 8, 1649 Zborowski peace was signed in which groups of Cossacks left Belarus, and the king announced an amnesty for the rebels. But it was a temporary truce. B. Khmelnytsky, fearing attack from the north, sent detachments of the Cossacks in the direction of Krichev and Gomel. Cossacks were defeated.

There was a battle near Berestechko in 1651. Cossacks were defeated, and on September 18, 1651 Belotserkovskii peace was signed. Cossack units went from Belarus, people's movement suppressed.

#### *Russia's war with Poland (1654–1667)*

The reason: in 1654 Bohdan Khmelnytsky and the Russian tsar Alexei Mikhailovich signed Pereyaslavskaya Rada in which the left-bank Ukraine departed under control of Russia, although it was legally the territory of Rech Paspalitaya. Therefore the war was a matter of time.

On May 21, 1654 the Russian command dealt a major blow to the territory of Belarus.

By the autumn of 1655 almost all Belarus was occupied by Russian except the Old Bykhov, Slutsk and Brest.

In the summer of 1655 Sweden attacked Rech Paspalitaya and captured part of the territory. Between magnates of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Sweden was signed Keidan treaty of union.

Since the beginning of 1656 Russia stopped military action against Rech Paspalitaya and negotiated (Truce of Vilna). Russian conditions:

1. After Yan Kasimir's death to elect to the Polish throne Russian Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich.

2. Poles should abandon Ukraine and Belarus in Russia's favor.

3. Joint military action against Sweden.

In 1656 Russian-Swedish War began. The beginning was for the Russian. But after Bohdan Khmelnytsky's death in 1657, the new hetman (military commander) of Ukraine Vygovskiy in 1658 signed Godyatsky agreement with Poland (Union of Ukraine with Rech Paspalitaya against Russia).

In October, 1658 hostilities renewed under the Vilna between Russia and Rech Paspalitaya. In the same year Russia signed a truce with Sweden. But the Russian retreated.

In the spring of 1660 after the peace with Sweden troops of Rech Paspalitaya established control over most of Belarus.

In 1667 Androsovsky truce of Rech Paspalitaya with Russia was signed for 13.5 years. Russia reserved the Smolensk province, Seversky land with Chernigov and Starodub, left-bank Ukraine with Kiev.

In 1686 the «The Eternal Peace Treaty» was signed in Moscow, which approved the position Androsovsky truce.

### **3.5. The causes of political crisis and decline of Rech Paspalitaya. The divisions of Rech Paspalitaya**

1. The main reason — the liberties of shlachta: *liberum veto*; elective monarchy by nobility, creating a confederation. Shlachta plunged the country into anarchy.

2. Religious policy. Union of Brest has split the nation.

3. The combination of national and religious oppression with feudal. It caused a peasant resistance.

4. Armed struggle of magnates for power.

During the reign of Augustus III (1733–1763) feudal anarchy deepened. In political life there was a new feature — the shlachta's appeal for help in solving the internal affairs to other states. Many people felt the end of the RP. In 1764 princes Chartoriyskiy proposed a number of reforms, but it has caused dissatisfaction among the parts of the shlachta, Prussia and Russia.

On August 5, 1772 at the suggestion of the Prussian king Fridrich II the Great in St. Petersburg a convention on the division of RP was signed between Russia, Prussia, Austria. Pomerania and part of Greater Poland moved to Prussia, south of Poland and part of western Ukraine with Lvov — to Austria, eastern Belarus with Gomel — to Russia. It was a «cold shower» for the Poles.

On May 3, 1791 Sejm passed the Constitution of RP: the abolition of elective kings; cancellation of *liberum veto*; executive power was exercised by rada as part of the king, the Catholic Primate (bishop) and 5 Ministers; declared freedom of religion, but the official remained Catholic.

Opponents of the Constitution in May 1792 in Torgovitsa created a confederation and asked Catherine II to restore the old rights («shlachta's liberties»).

The second partition of RP between Prussia and Russia was in 1793. Prussia withdrew Danzig and the Great Poland. Central Belarus with Minsk and the right-bank Ukraine moved to Russia.

On March 24, 1794 in Krakow uprising began, led by lieutenant general Tadeush Kosciuszko. Purpose: independence RP within the borders of 1772.

On May 7, 1794 a «Proclamation of Połaniec» issued which declared personally free peasants, but without land.

On April 23, 1794 the rebels took Vilna and created a «Supreme Lithuanian rada», headed by Jakub Jasinski.

Prussia, Austria and Russia entered the troops. The main battle took place on October 10, 1794 near Warsaw at Maciejowice. Russian troops led by A.V. Suvorov defeated the Poles and on November 6, 1794 Warsaw capitulated, the uprising was crushed.

The third partition of RP was happened in 1795. Russia absorbed the western Belarus, eastern Lithuania and the part of the western Ukraine, Prussia received Krakow, Austria — Sandomierz, Chelm, Lublin. After the third partition of RP ceased to exist.

### **3.6. Culture of Rech Paspalitaya**

In 1773 The Commission of National Education was created (first established the Ministry of Public Education in Europe). It canceled the teaching in school curricula religion.

In the second half of the XVIII century interest increased in the natural science, created classrooms in schools for experimental work.

Scientific center of Belarus was the Vilna Academy. Grodno Medical School founded by Antoni Tyzengauz also played a large role. French physician and naturalist Jean Gilibert led its in 1775. He created the school's office of natural science, pharmacy, anatomical theater and a botanical garden.

A large role was played by the works of the Enlightenment: Voltaire, Rousseau, Radishchev, Kozelskii, Calantha, Staszic and others.

Ideas of Enlightenment aroused strong opposition to the church. In the 80s of the XVIII century antivolterovskaya company (company against Voltaire's ideas) was deployed. But the founders of Enlightenment were surrounded by great honor.

First periodical «Gazeta Grodzenska» (1776–1783) was appeared on the Belarusian land. Personal library were grown: Nesvizhskaya (Radziwill) was the richest in the RP, the library of Sapieha, Chreptowicz in Shchorsy.

Magnates' estates became centers of cultural life. Magnates surrounded themselves by luxury, ordered from abroad the best architects, musicians and artists (architects Glaubitz, Sakko, Spampani).



Serf theaters: Radziwill in Nesvizh (1740–90s) and from 1751 to 1760 — in Slutsk; in Slonim from 1771 to 1791 — theatre of M. Ogiński; in Grodno from 1769 to 1789 — theatre of A. Tyzengauz.

There were ballet and music school in Slutsk, Slonim, Nesvizh, Grodno, Shklov where children of burghers and serfs studied dramatics, dance, singing, possession of musical instruments. Pupils of Grodno Tyzengauz school shone on the Polish scene and laid the nucleus of the Royal Ballet, and graduates of Shklov ballet and music schools replenished the troupe of the Imperial Theaters in St. Petersburg.

#### *Literature.*

The secular trend gradually began to dominate. At the end of the XVIII century in Belarus books were printed in Polish, French, Latin, Italian, German, Russian, Jewish and Latvian. Styles: classicism and sentimentalism.

Belarusian literature manifested itself in political satire (legal rostrum was not): «Ukas garachy», «Praspekt», «Pesnya Ruska» and so on. In 1794 there was «Song Belarusian zhayneray». This was the first in the Belarusian literature direct appeal to the people to struggle against tsarism. Genre structure was modified: poetry came to the fore. Comedic poetry was developed (mostly biblical scenes). In 1787 there was the first Belarusian «Kamediya» (Comedy) by Cajetan Marashevskiy consisting of several acts.

## **TOPIC 4 BELARUS IN RUSSIAN EMPIRE**

### **4.1. Socio-economic development of the region in the first half of XIX century**

After the partitions of RP a new territorial-administrative division of the Belarusian lands was formed in 5 provinces: Vilna, Grodno, Minsk, Mogilev and Vitebsk.

The diversity of reforms carried out by the Russian government can be summarized as follows:

I. The introduction of Russian civil laws.

II. Policy in the sphere of land ownership. After the joining of Belarusian territories the land of the nobles who refused to swear allegiance to the empress and did not sell their land within three months were subjected to confiscation, and lands were also seized from the people who involved in the uprising of 1794.

There was policy of inculcation Russian land ownership (Rumyantsev, Suvorov). It was developed program of benefits for the residence of the Russian nobility in Belarus.

III. Policy towards the shlachta. Belarusian shlachta represented medium and small aristocratic stratum. The poorest nobles associated restoration of his position with the restoration of RP. Therefore shlachta presented itself for the power as dangerous opposition elements.

2 stages of policy:

The first stage was checkup of shlachta (before the rebellion of 1830–1831). Provincial chancellory reviewed proof of nobility. This process has been slow.

The second stage was parse of shlachta (after 1831). The purpose of parse was to exclude the poorest and most politically unstable from the nobility. Shlachta was excluded from the nobility which did not provide documents about its nobility within 3 years (the decree on October 19, 1831).

IV. Policy in the peasant question.

1. Policy in relation to the landlord peasants (Inventory Reform in 1844–1857).

The «Western Committee» was created in 1823. Its goal: to improve the situation of the peasantry. After its work the question of revision of peasant stock was raised. And provincial inventory committees were opened in 1844. However, new inventories could not input. The amount of land has been overstated in the inventory, therefore duties were overstated too. A review was started. When the peasantry have calmed down, the excitement began among the landowners (the amount of land was underestimated). This state of affairs continued until 1857, when the reform was discontinued because at this time reform to abolish serfdom began to develop.

Thus, Inventory Reform did not bring tangible results.

2. Relationship to the state peasants.

In 1839 Kiselev's reform (earl Kiselev was the Minister of State Property of the Russian Empire) was represented by the following directions:

- management reform of the state village;
- policy custody of state peasants;
- testing and commissioning of state inventories.

In general, level of public life in the villages was dramatically increased in contrast to landlords.

## **4.2. War in 1812 in Belarus**

After the defeat of Prussia in 1806 Napoleon Bonaparte created the principality of Warsaw and promised to revive the Rech Paspalitaya. French army came to the border of Russia. This army included about 70 thousand of Poles (corps of Prince Poniatowski). West direction tucked in three Russian Army: 1<sup>st</sup> was under the command of Barclay de Tolly (stationed near Vilna), 2<sup>nd</sup> – under the command of Prince Bagration (housed in the Grodno region), 3d – under the command of Tormasov (located in Ukraine).

On June 24, 1812 Napoleon began invasion. On June 28, 1812 he took Vilna and on July, 1 created the provisional government under the name «The Commission of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania». Commission activities covered Vilna, Grodno, Minsk province and Bialystok region. A special so-called «Polish rule» were allocated for Vitebsk and Mogilev provinces. Key issues to address to these governments were: supplying the army with everything they

need and a set of recruits to the army. Looting of villages was begun, as a consequence, a partisan war started.

The main task of the French army on the territory of Belarus was not to connect the first and second Russian armies and defeat them separately. But they could not be implemented.

On July 22, 1812 armies of Bagration and Barclay united at Smolensk.

On August 2–5, 1812 the Battle of Smolensk was, after which M. I. Kutuzov headed the overall command (August 8). Russian army retreated.

On August, 26 the Battle of Borodino was. Russian retreated. In order to maintain and replenish the army Kutuzov gave Moscow to the French. Napoleon was in Moscow for a month and waited in vain for the proposals of the Russian Emperor Alexander I about the peace. Then Napoleon decided to leave the Ukraine for the winter, and he continued the military campaign. But Russian troops did not to allow him to carry out his plan and the retreat of the French began on the old ruined road to Smolensk.

On October 7, 1812 Wittgenstein's corps released Polotsk, Vitebsk — on October, 26 and on November, 4 army of Admiral Chichagov liberated Minsk.

Battle of Berezina River crossing was on November, 14–17 where 30 thousand Frenchmen died, Napoleon narrowly escaped.

On December 8, 1812 Russian troops without a fight took Grodno.

### **4.3. Socio-political movement in Belarus («Philamath», «Philarets», «The Decembrists»)**

On October 1, 1817 society of Philamath (those who loves science) was founded at the University of Vilna. The founders of this company were students of Vilnius University Adam Mickiewicz, Tomash Zan, Yan Chechet. Philamath society was a number of clubs that connected youth.

In the autumn of 1820 society of Philarets (lovers of virtue) was established in Polotsk seminary. Movement of Philamath and Philarets was not beyond enlightenment. It was about the moral re-education of the ruling class, Philamath didn't put forward calls for revolutionary struggle. Nevertheless there have been arrested in society of Philamath in 1823.

Decembrists ideologically and organizationally affected the territory of Belarus. In 1825 in the corps of Lithuania (Bialystok) on the initiative of former philomath M. Rukevich «Society for military friends» was created. In December, 1825 in this corps an attempt to revolt was by K. Igelstrom. There was also an attempt to revolt under the leadership of S. Trusov in 1826 in Bobruisk (refusal to swear allegiance to the new emperor). In general, the Decembrists conservatively solved the national question (Russia is one and indivisible). They did not put the Belarusians as a separate ethnic group and did not see the independent existence of Belarus. The purpose of the Decembrist movement was the introduction of a constitution in Russia.

#### **4.4. The Uprising (1830–1831)**

The uprising began on November 29, 1830. The impetus for the uprising was given by the French Revolution in 1830. The aim of the uprising was the restoration of *Rech Paspalitaya* in the range 1772. The guide of the uprising was dominated by conservatives led by Adam Chartoryski, democrats rallied around professor I. Lelevel and established on his initiative «patriotic club».

In December, 1830 martial law was declared in western Belarus. But, despite this, in March, 1831 the uprising began in Lithuania and western Belarus. Vilensky central rebel committee was created. On the territory of Belarus major military actions were not, and there were small clashes with insurgent groups. Warsaw sent military units here (under the command of generals Hlopovskiy and Gelguda), but they couldn't achieved any success. In general, the people did not support the rebellion, because agrarian question (the question of land) was not hesitated. On June 19, 1831 the combined forces of the Polish troops and local insurgent groups were defeated near Vilna by Russian troops. In August, 1831 revolt was suppressed in Belarus.

On September 8, 1831 Warsaw was taken.

Results of the uprising: the abolition of the autonomy of Poland and the Constitution of 1815, repression of participants.

#### **4.5. The abolition of serfdom and carrying out bourgeois reforms**

Two main reasons were led to the abolition of serfdom in Russia:

- serfdom stifled economic development of the state;
- growth of serfdom movement.

A striking example of the crisis of land system was the Crimean War (1853–1856) in which Russia lost to the highly developed capitalist countries.

The manifesto on the abolition of serfdom was released on February 19, 1861. The manifesto received peasants' personal freedom (they could conclude on their own behalf civilian and property agreements, open trade and industry, move in the other classes). The manifesto claimed that over the past two years peasants had to bear the same obligations as during serfdom. Then they could buy the land. Prior to the redemption operation peasants were considered time-obliged and had to pay the rent and serve serfdom.

The peasants had to redeem «*nadel*» (land lot). The principle of operation of the redemption: capitalization of dues at the rate of 6 % per annum. For example, the rent was 6 rubles per year, 6 % was the annual interest rate at a bank. In this way:

$$6 - 6 \%$$

$$x - 100\%$$

$$x = 6 \times 100 : 6 = 100 \text{ rubles.}$$

It was the redemption price for the land. 20–25 % of these amount peasants paid directly to the landlord. The state paid another part. Peasants became indebted to state and over 49 years they had to repay a debt with interest. Thus,

peasants overpaid for the land 3–4 times of its market price. Conditions of the manifesto caused widespread dissatisfaction among the peasants.

Reform in 1861 on a national context has caused a number of bourgeois reforms.

Zemstvo reform was in 1864. For this reform zemstvos (local government) were created in the provinces and districts. Zemstvos were elected representative institutions. They consisted of district and provincial zemstvo assembly, which met once a year for a few days. Zemstvo assemblies were administrative bodies. There was also *zemskaya uprava*, which operated continuously and was the executive board. They were elected at representative council (*zemskoye sobranie*). Elections were held in zemstvo 1 time in 3 years. The competence of zemstvos included leadership of the local economy, education and health care. To carry out these activities tax clerk was passed for zemsky institutions. But zemstvos were not introduced in Belarus. This was due to the responses to the rebellion of 1863–1864. Only in March, 1911 zemstvos were introduced in Minsk, Vitebsk and Mogilev provinces.

Judicial reform was also in 1864. According to this reform, the court was to be classless, public and independent of the government. The institution of barristers (lawyers) was introduced. Two judicial systems were created: 1st — *Local judicial settlements* (magistrates and justices of the peace congress, they decided trivial civil and criminal cases). 2nd — *General judicial settlements* (district). One district court accounted for 1 province. The higher court was Court of Justice.

In Belarus magistrates appeared in 1872 with the peculiarity that they were not selected, but they were appointed by the Minister of Justice. District courts, judicial chambers, prosecutors and lawyers in Belarus have been introduced since 1882.

Urban reform was in 1870. For this reform classless governments were created in cities. City Duma (the parliament/legislative branch of power) and town council were engaged in the modernization of the city (sanitation, water supply, etc.). Elections were held 1 time in 4 years. In Belarus the city governments have been introduced since 1875.

In 1862 Military reform was. 15 military districts were established (including Vilna, all Belarusian provinces). Compulsory military service for men who have reached 20 years of age was introduced in 1874. The service life was shortened to 6 years on land, the sea — up to 7 years. Young people who had higher education served 6 months, graduated from high school — 1.5 years, the city schools — 3 years, elementary schools — 4 years.

School reform was in 1864. The estates of the realm restrictions were canceled on admission to universities, but enrollment regulated high tuition fees. The network of primary schools expanded, classical and real gymnasium (a type of school with a strong emphasis on academic learning) provided advanced secondary education. In classical gymnasium advantage was given to the study of foreign languages and humanities. In real gymnasiums science developed. At the end of the classical gymnasium graduates had the right to enter without examination to the University, and a real high school — to institutes.

In 1865 Censorship reform was. Prior censorship was canceled for the original editions of not less than 10 printed pages, and for the conversion of publications (20 printed pages). But the authorities could prohibit the issue of entire publications, in the case of anti-government publications.

#### **4.6. The Uprising in 1863–1864**

Peasants' unrest were intensified after the reform. Disobedience of peasants grew into an armed struggle. The peasants movement was closely intertwined with the national and liberation movement. In the national and liberation movement allocated 2 directions:

- democratic;
- bourgeois-landlord.

Democratic (its representatives were called «red»).

Social base was artisans, peasants, landless and land-poor shlachta, lower church clergy. In the autumn of 1861 the Rebel City Committee was created in Warsaw, which later became known as the Central National Committee (CNC). The Red set apart 2 branches: moderate red and the left red. The program of moderate red did not have question about a peasant revolution. They thought that it was necessary to transfer land to the peasants, which they have used but the state should pay compensation to landowners. This program was characterized by nationalistic tendencies to restore *Rech Paspalitaya* within the boundaries of 1772. The program of the left red provided for the elimination of landlordism and transfer of all land to the people. They recognized the right of national self-determination of all peoples inhabiting the former *Rech Paspalitaya*.

Bourgeois-landlord direction («White»).

Social base was the big landowners and manufacturers. Coordinating center was «Directorate». «White» opposed the uprising. They wanted to achieve independence of *Rech Paspalitaya* through negotiations with the tsarist government by means of diplomatic assistance of Britain and France.

In 1861–1862 there was a consolidation of the democratic forces of Belarus and Lithuania, which culminated in the establishment of the Lithuanian Provincial Committee (LPC) at the end of summer 1862. Leading position in LPC was occupied by K. Kalinowski, L. Svezhdovski, W. Wrublewski, F. Rozhanski. Unity was not in LPC. This committee had to take a position of CNC. Committee was headed by K. Kalinowski from October 1862.

##### *Course of the uprising*

The first stage was in January-March, 1863

The uprising began in Warsaw in the night from 10 to 11 January 1863.

On January 20, 1863 LPC declared itself a revolutionary government in the western region (Belarus and Lithuania). The manifesto was issued, which generally supported the manifesto of CNC. The main rebel forces were concentrated in the provinces of Grodno and Kovno. A peasant line was gradually begun to show in the uprising. The danger of escalating rebellion in a peasant revolution led to action of «White» (Askerko, brothers Yalenskie, Geishtor), who managed to seize power in the LPC.

The second stage was in April-June, 1863

«White» has not happened in a straight line in its policy. A number of members of the military organization led by Z. Sirakovski came from Russia. He was appointed commander of the troops. If on the first phase battles were fought by troops which were sent from the Polish, now Sirakovski commanded to create local groups. So, Sirakovski collected five thousand troops in Zhmud and tried to capture Vilna, but he was blocked and defeated. Sirakovski was captured and later was executed. Peak of revolt was in April, 1863. The center of the rebel movement became Grodno province. In the east of Belarus rebels reached certain success in Mogilev. On April 24, 1863 rebels under the leadership of L. Zvezhdovski captured Gorki, joined with students Gori-Goritski Agricultural Institute.

But in general rebellion was not supported by the peasants in the east (confessional factor).

In May, 1863 rebellion was suppressed in the east of Belarus.

The third stage was in July-autumn, 1863

In early June, 1863 Kalinowski returned to Vilna. He became commissioner of the Warsaw government in Vilna. All power was concentrated in his hands. Red tried to hot up the rebellion. They changed their tactics. Small mobile partisan groups appeared instead of large groups. But in this period the mass departure of shlachta from the uprising was marked. At the end of August, 1863 Kalinowski received orders from Warsaw to stop the uprising and conduct underground struggle, but in 1864 he again tried to resume the rebellion. But Kalinowski betrayed in night from 8 to 9 December 1863 and he was arrested. On March 10, 1864 he was executed in Vilna.

#### **4.7. Development of culture**

Education.

The main directions of school policy:

- Unification school (reduction to the all-Russian sample).
- Giving the secular character to the school.
- Russification of the school.

Vilnius University was opened in 1803. This was one of the largest scientific centers of the Russian Empire. Trustee of the University was Adam Chartoryski. The university formed a powerful layer of local Belarusian-Lithuanian professors (according to Adam Kirkor, among 47 professors 36 were local).

On May 2, 1832 Vilnius University was closed.

In addition to the Vilnius University in Belarus there was secondary educational link: gymnasium, progymnasium. They obeyed district schools, and they in turn — parish schools.

In the first half of the XIX century ecclesiastical education preserved. From 1812 to 1820 Polotsk Jesuit Academy existed.

In 1828 a new school statute was approved which abolished the old school submission. Different types of schools acquired their social orientation. For pea-

santry one-class parish schools existed. Three-year district schools were for higher layers. Gymnasium was for the nobility. Teachers' seminaries opened to train teachers of public schools (Vitebsk teachers' seminary opened in 1834).

In 1848 Gori-Goritski Agricultural Institute was established on the basis of the agricultural school.

#### Literature.

The beginning of the XIX century for the whole of Europe was characterized by the spreading of romanticism. This time gave the whole pleiade of leaders in the field of Belarusian national literature.

*Adam Mickiewicz* was a representative of the Polish-Belarusian literature. He was born in Novogrudok in a wealthy gentry family. Mickiewicz wrote: «About 10 million speak in the Belarusian language. It is the richest and purest dialect, which was a long time». Major works: the poem «Pan Tadeusz», «Dzyady», «Conrad Valenrod» and others.

*Vladislav Syrokomlya* was born on Lyubanshchine, took the side of the Belarusian peasantry. He mostly wrote his works in Polish, but there were works in the Belarusian («Already ptushki pyayuts usyudy» («Already the birds are singing everywhere»)). Traditions of Syrokomlya were maintained and developed by his student *Vincent Karatynsky*. Karatynsky worked in the newspaper «Vilna Kurier», he was a member of the Vilnius Archaeological Commission, only three poems of the Belarusian heritage of the poet came to us. Karatynsky was the author of the poem in the Belarusian language in the album which was presented to Alexander I when he visited Vilnius. In the autumn of 1862 Syrokomlya died and Vincent Karatynsky published 10-volume heritage of his teacher.

*Yan Chechet*. Chechet already wrote a poem in the Belarusian language in the period of Philamath. He collected folklore and published in the ethnographic collections (in the 40s of the XIX century 6 such collections came out). Chechet considered one of the founders of the new Belarusian literature.

*Pavluk Bagrym*. He was a commoner, the son of a serf smith. He lived in the town Kroshin. In 1828 peasant unrest occurred in Kroshin. During the investigation, Bagrym accused of distributing unauthorized works. He has been selected three notebooks with poems. Only one poem reached us — «Tune up, tune up, small boy». Then he was sent to the army for 25 years. After serving, he returned to Kroshin and was known as a skilled blacksmith.

*Vincent Dunin-Marcinkiewicz* (first classic of the Belarusian literature). He was born in Bobruisk, lived near Minsk. Since the mid-40s of XIX century Dunin-Marcinkiewicz emerged as Belarusian writer. During this period he wrote «Sielyanka», «Gapon», «Kupala», «Pinskaya shlachta» and others. Of particular importance had the first Belarusian translation into Belarusian of Adam Mickiewicz's poem «Pan Tadeusz». In Minsk a kind of cultural center was formed around Marcinkiewicz and his family. In 1852 his play «Sielyanka» was staged in Minsk.



## **TOPIC 5**

### **BELARUS ON THE EVE AND THE FIRST SOVIET YEARS**

#### **5.1. The October Revolution in 1917 in Belarus**

On August 1, 1914 the First World War began, which was attended by 38 countries. By 1917 a great discontent with the war matured among the people that led to the revolution in February, 1917 and the overthrow of the autocracy. Power in the country was exercised by the Provisional Government, formed from the representatives of the State Duma. With the victory of the February Revolution the peace didn't come. The war continued. The economic situation worsened. Social tensions increased.

Party alliance of the Socialists Revolutionaries (the SRs) and Mensheviks supported the Provisional Government. It has sought to delay the radical reforms in the country until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. The Bolsheviks were the only party that was not compromised themselves by collaborating with the Provisional Government. Right-wing forces saw way out of the crisis in curtailing democratic freedoms, the elimination of the Soviets, the fixation a strong power (the idea of the dictatorship). Army generals actively acted in this direction. In parallel, the Soviets reinforced the position of the Bolsheviks.

On July 4, 1917 in St. Petersburg Bolsheviks organized armed demonstration demanding the transfer all power to the Soviets. The demonstration was dispersed by means of troops. Repression began. Lenin disappeared. A new government was created which headed by SRs A.F. Kerenski.

In late July-early August 1917 the VI Congress of RSDLP (The Russian Social Democratic Labour Party) was passed. Myasnikov attended from Minsk. The slogan «All Power to the Soviets!» was removed. Congress took a course for an armed uprising. Chief of the Russian army L.G. Kornilov withdrew some of the troops from the front and moved on Petrograd at the end of August 1917. The Bolsheviks organized the defeat of the Kornilov revolt, after which bolshevization of the Soviets began.

On October 25, 1917 in Petrograd Bolsheviks overthrew the Provisional Government. On October, 26 II All-Russian Congress of Soviets declared the Soviet government in the center and in the local places and took the decrees on peace and land. The government (the Council of People's Commissars — CPC) was created, which was headed by Lenin.

On October, 26 Minsk Council took power in its hands (Military Revolutionary Committee (MRC) was headed by K. Lander, members were A. Myasnikov, V. N. Knorin, etc.). But opposition to the Soviets was by «Committee to Save the Revolution» led by the Menshevik T. Kolotukhin, which was established on October, 27 by Mensheviks, Socialist Revolutionaries, Bund, Zionists. Committee introduced Caucasian division in Minsk and presented an ultimatum to the Council on the transfer of all power to the Committee. But revolutionary troops

arrived from the front and the Committee was dissolved, Kolotukhin was arrested. Power in one-party basis established for Minsk Soviet in other cities of Belarus.

«The Executive Committee of the Western Region and the front» was formed on November 26, 1917. It was headed by the Bolshevik N. Ragozinski, and the government — K. Lander.

## **5.2. Development of the Belarusian national movement in the inter-revolutionary period**

On March 25–27, 1917 Congress of Belarusian organizations was held in Minsk, where the Belarusian National Committee (BNC) was created, consisting of representatives of the Belarusian Party of People's Socialists (BPPS) and Belarusian Socialist Assembly (BSA), which resumed its activities in 1917. Head of BNC was R. Skirmunt.

In the summer of 1917 relations between left and right aggravated in the Belarusian national movement. Guide of BSA required to exclude the right of the composition of the BNC. To this end, they decided to convene II Congress of the Belarusian national organizations in July, 1917.

On July 8–10, 1917 Congress was held in Minsk. Congress supported the proposal of BSA on the implementation of cultural-national autonomy of Belarus as a part of Russian Democratic Republic. The Central Rada was elected (the majority of the BSA). The Executive Committee of Rada was headed by Yezep Lyosik. Rada tried to unite all national organizations in Belarus and abroad. Rada published the newspaper «Free Belarus». It put to the Provisional Government issues about the establishment of Belarusian local authorities, the organization of the Belarusian military units. But the Provisional Government rejected them.

Series of military Congress of Western, Northern, Southwestern, Romanian and others fronts was in the autumn of 1917. As a result of these Congresses Central Military Belarusian Rada (CMBR) was established in Minsk (headed by colonel S. Rak-Michailovskiy), which was engaged in the creation of the Belarusian military units.

In October, 1917 Central Rada was transformed into the Great Belarusian Rada (GBR). It stated that assumed the role of the Belarusian regional authorities and elected a commission for the conduct of public affairs.

After the October Revolution GBR recognized the power of the Soviets in Russia, but didn't recognize in Belarus. Belarusian figures solely viewed «Regional Executive Committee of the Western Region and the front» as a front authority, as its presidium only consisted of representatives from the front and there was no Belarusian.

## **5.3. The first All-Belarusian National Congress**

On October 27, 1917 GBR, CMBR, BSA, BPPS jointly issued the «Charter to Belarusian people» with an appeal to rally around the GBR to end the anarchy and to protect the homeland.

On November 30, 1917 they addressed an appeal «To all Belarusian people», where expressed its political program: Belarus was a democratic republic, and it was in federal relations with Russia and other neighboring republics; the transfer of all power in Belarus to Provincial Rada which to be elected by universal suffrage; imparting by the land to the peasants; formation of Belarusian army.

For the organization of power in the central and local places the appeal announced the convocation of the Congress of Representatives of the Belarusian people in Minsk.

On December 15–17, 1917 I All-Belarusian national Congress was held in Minsk. It was attended by 1,872 delegates from various organizations. The Bolsheviks observed the Congress without interruption. But when resolutions were adopted to create an organ of regional authorities in the face of the All-Belarusian Congress of peasants, workers' and soldiers' deputies, when Rada of the Congress was elected (71 people) and thus outlawed the Regional Executive Committee, the Bolsheviks broke up the congress.

Members of the Presidium of the All-Belarusian Congress did not obey the decision of the Bolsheviks, and on December 18, 1917 they held a secret meeting at which they created Executive Committee of Rada of All-Belarusian Congress. It included 17 people. Tomash Grib headed (the leader of the left-wing of the BSA). Executive Committee and Rada began to prepare an armed uprising against the Bolsheviks.

#### **5.4. The declaration of the Belarusian People's Republic (BPR)**

On February 18, 1918 after peace talks were broken off between Soviet Russia and Germany, which were begun in Brest on December 9, 1917, German troops launched an offensive.

In the night from 19 to 20 February, 1918 «Regional Executive Committee of the Western region and the front» was forced to leave Minsk and units of the Belarusian parliament took power in the town.

On February 21, 1918 Executive Committee of the All-Belarusian Congress appealed to the people from the first Association charter, in which it declared itself the temporary power and promised to convene the All-Belarusian constituent Congress. The People's Secretariat (Government) was created the head of which was I. Voronko (the leader of the right-wing of the BSA).

On February 25 the Germans entered the city and established their occupation regime.

On March 3, 1918 Soviet Russia and Germany signed the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty, under which the land west of the line Riga-Dvinsk-Svyantsyany-Lida-Pruzhany departed to Germany and Austria-Hungary.

On March 9, 1918 Executive Committee issued the second Association charter by which Belarus was declared the People's Republic and the Executive Committee was renamed Rada of the BPR. Presidium of Rada was headed by I. Sereda. The abolition of private ownership of land, the introduction of an 8-hour workday, make promises to convene a constituent congress were announced in charter.

Germans behaved ambiguous against to the Rada of BPR. On the one hand, it was the disavowal of the BPR by official Berlin. On the other — the support of the occupation of the 10th German Army.

On March 24, 1918 session of the Rada of BPR was convened. There were representatives of the Vilna Belarusian Rada (established on January 27, 1918, was headed by Lutskevich). In the night of March, 25 the third Association charter was adopted which declared independent of BPR. But the Germans did not recognize the BPR. Therefore, on April 25, 1918 telegram was sent to Kaiser of Germany Wilhelm II, in which gratitude was expressed for the liberation of Belarus from the Bolshevik oppression and anarchy. After this telegram the SRs, Mensheviks and Jewish socialists came out from Rada. People's Secretariat began to disintegrate. The crisis led to a split in the BSA on the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Social Democrats and the Socialist-Federalists.

On October 8, 1918 Rada of the People of Ministers was established (Prime was A. Lutskevich).

Revolution in Germany was on November 3, 1918 (social democrats came to power). Soviet Russia annulled the Brest-Litovsk treaty. Occupiers left.

On November 28, 1918 the fourth charter of BPR called for the preservation of order, which was previously set and to the protection of its will and independence.

Leaving in Vilna, Rada and the government of BPR issued the fifth charter in which the people were called for action against Soviet power.

In general, the Rada of BPR was only on paper, it did not have real power in Belarus.

### **5.5. Self-determination of Belarus on the soviet basis**

The November Revolution in Germany accelerated the liberation of the occupied territories. In November, 1918 Polish state was revived. Yu.Pilsudski (leader of Poland) said about the state within the borders of 1772.

On December 10, 1918 the Red Army joined Minsk. On December 24, 1918 Plenum of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) (the RCP (b)) adopted a resolution on the proclamation of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Belarus (SSRB) and at the same time instructed the Northwest Regional Committee Party to deploy preparatory work for nation-building in Belarus.

On December 30, 1918 Northwest Regional Committee convened VI Northwest Regional Conference of the RCP (b) to discuss the creation of the SSRB and the Communist Party of Belarus (CPB) in Smolensk.

On January 1, 1919 the manifesto on the establishment of the SSRB was unveiled in Smolensk which consisted of 5 provinces: Grodno, Minsk, Smolensk, Vitebsk, Mogilev (this was the first classified SSRB).

On January 5, 1919 Minsk was declared the capital of SSRB.

On January 8, 1919 government moved from Smolensk to Minsk and started preparing for the I All-Belarusian Congress of Soviets to approve decisions.

On January 16, 1919 CC RCP (b) decided about the allocation of Vitebsk, Mogilev and Smolensk provinces from the BSSR and incorporating them into Russia.

The Soviet government was well aware of the mood of the ruling circles of Poland (Poland within the borders of 1772). Therefore, the tactics of the CC RCP (b) in the Belarusian issue was built taking into account this factor. It was assumed that included Mogilev and Vitebsk provinces in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (the RSFSR), if the Polish state seized other territories, in the future would become the basis for the revival of the Belarusian statehood.

It was also suggested by the CC RCP (b) at the Congress of Soviets of Belarus to decide on the merger between Belarus and Lithuania. Lithuanian-Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic was supposed to be an obstacle on the tracks of aggressive aspirations of Poland.

On February 2–3, 1919 Minsk hosted the 1st All-Belarusian Congress of Soviets (230 delegates were). It was attended by the head of the Central Executive Committee Sverdlov. Congress approved the creation of the SSRB, adopted a constitution SSRB (it included 32 articles).

Belarus was declared republic of Soviets of workers', soldiers' and peasants' deputies. Supreme power was vested in the All-Belarusian Congress of Soviets. And in the period between Congresses — to the Central Executive Committee which was elected by the Congress. Congress had to meet at least two times a year. Also the Congress adopted a resolution to merge Lithuania and Belarus.

On February 17–21, 1919 the 1st Congress of Soviets of Lithuania was held which approved the decision to merge.

Already on February, 22 Polish Sejm decided on the mobilization of reservists (600 thousand people). Hostilities began with the end of February, but they were not significant. The largest Polish offensive unfolded in the spring.

On February 27, 1919 CEC (The Central Election Commission) of BSSR and CEC of Lithuania were united. It was created by the government headed by V. Mitskyavichus-Kapsukas. The head of the CEC became K. Tsihovski. LitBel (the Lithuanian-Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic) consisted of Minsk, Grodno, Vilna, Kovno and parts of Suvalki provinces with a population of over 4 million people.

On April 8, 1919 CEC of LitBel introduced in the country under martial law. But delay of the onset of Poles failed.

On April 21, 1919 Poles took Vilna. Government of LitBel moved to Minsk.

3/4 territories of LitBel were occupied by the Poles by mid-July, 1919.

By the autumn of 1919 front stabilized at the line Desna-Lepel-Borisov-Bobruisk-Rechitsa. All LitBel was practically occupied.

In March, 1920 Poles launched a new offensive. Mozyr, Kalinkovichi, Rechitsa were taken. But troops were deployed from the Eastern Front, and on May 14, 1920 Soviet counteroffensive began. All Belarus was liberated by the end of July, 1920. Commander of the Western Front was M. Tukhachevsky.

On July 30, 1920 the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Belarusian Republic was created which was headed by Chervyakov who began organizing of annunciation BSSR.

The second announcement SSRB was on July 31, 1920.

Feature of the 2nd announcement of SSRB were not marked boundaries of the country. The SSRB was declared when the Red Army was advancing to the West and it came to Warsaw by the middle of August. But on August, 16 Poles launched a counteroffensive. Western Belarus invaded by Poland.

On October 12, 1920 the armistice was signed between Russia and Poland.

On March 18, 1921 Riga Peace Treaty was signed. Grodno province, eastern povets of Vilna and western povets of Minsk provinces moved to Poland.

Thus, the territory of Belarus consisted of 6 povets of Minsk province: Minsk, Borisov, Shumen, Slutsk, Bobruisk and Mozyr with a population of about 1,633,000 people.

## **TOPIC 6**

### **DEVELOPMENT BSSR IN THE 20s-30s**

#### **6.1. Socio-economic situation in the country. The policy of «War communism»**

During the civil war and intervention the policy of «War communism» was introduced in the country. The policy of «War communism» was reduced to a purely exceptional economic measures, due to the complicated internal and foreign political situation. For the first time the term «War communism» was used by A. A. Bogdanov (November, 1917).

The main components of «War communism»:

1. Prodravverstka (was a Bolshevik policy and campaign of confiscation of grain and other agricultural produce from the peasants for a nominal fixed price according to specified quotas): on January 11, 1919 — for bread and from 1920 — for all products). The content: each province, municipality, the community had to pass a certain number of products to the state assuming a yield estimates. And only when everything has been deposited, the authorities issued tickets, which gave the farmers the right to purchase manufactured goods. Peasants responded to the prodravverstka reduction in acreage by 35–60 %.

2. Centralized management of nationalized industry (on June 28, 1918 — Decree on nationalization of industry).

3. Forced cooperation (the creation of collective farms).

4. Forcible distribution.

5. Naturalization of salary.

6. The introduction of compulsory labor service (from 1918 compulsory labor service was introduced for members of former exploiting classes, and from 1920 — labor conscription).

After the Civil War the search was begun for how to live.

## **6.2. The introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP)**

There was growing dissatisfaction with the policy of violence and coercion, as a consequence, mass peasant uprisings. In 1920 martial law remained in 36 provinces. 150,000th army fought with rebels of Ukraine and 100,000th army of Tukhachevsky — in Tambov. In February-March, 1921 the Kronstadt rebellion broke out.

Lenin formulated two lessons of Kronstadt: 1. only an agreement with the farmers can save the socialist revolution in Russia until the revolution didn't come in other countries; 2. to tighten struggle against the Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries and the other opposition with a view to their complete isolation from the masses.

On March 8–16, 1921 the X Congress of the RCP (b) was held where two main questions considered: 1. prohibition of factions within the party; 2. the replacement of prodrazverstka in prodnalog («the tax in kind», or a tax on food production).

On March 21, 1921 Decree «On the replacement food and raw materials the surplus tax on natural tax». The tax in kind was a certain percentage of the harvest.

The period of the NEP started. The main burden of the tax fell on the rich peasants. Farmer could sell surpluses at a free price on the market. Farmers were given the right to choose the form of land use. Wage labor and land rent were allowed, but limited. Centralization in the management of the country's economy was reduced. A number of companies was moved to self-sufficiency. Wage equalization abolished. Free hiring of workers was introduced. NEP changed attitude of the state to private capital. Support for small-scale private and cooperative enterprises was announced. It was allowed creating small private enterprises in May, 1921. Denationalization of small enterprises was in June, 1921.

### *Features of the NEP in Belarus:*

1. At the beginning of 1925 chairman of the CPC (from 1924 BSSR re-named as SSRB) A. Chervyakov made a report on the situation in Belarus. He concluded as follows: «1921 in Belarus was a year of struggle against banditry, 1922 was used to create the state apparatus. It was only 1923 it was obtained by the opportunity to lead a purposeful work to restore the destroyed economy», i.e. only since 1923 a policy of the NEP began in Belarus.

2. It was understood until the problem of territorial consolidation of Belarus was not solved in 1923, no development of such a small republic can not be.

3. In general, the peasantry became peasant of average means in the USSR. But kulaks (were a category of relatively affluent farmers) and peasant of average means almost was not in Belarus.

If by the end of 1925 in the whole of the USSR industry was restored, BSSR was restored only large-scale industry. A full recovery referred by 1927.

### **6.3. The tendencies in public and political life**

#### *A) Nation-building.*

In 1923 Belarusian territory amounted to 52.3 thousand km<sup>2</sup> (6 powiats of former Minsk province). Such a republic could not consolidate the nation and to play an equal role among the other Soviet republics.

In March-April, 1923 the VII Congress of the CPB was passed, which called for the consolidation of the Belarusian SSR.

On March 3, 1924 Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR decided to transfer Vitebsk province except Sebezhsky, Nevelsky, Velizh districts; Gomel province, except the Gomel and Rechitsa districts; part of Smolensk province (Gorki district and part of Mstislav district with the city Mstislavl) to BSSR. The territory of the Belarusian SSR increased more than 2 times (110.5 thousand km<sup>2</sup>), and the population was 4.2 million people.

In September, 1926 Central Committee of CPB sent a letter to the Central Committee of the CPSU (b) which stated that the question of the borders of BSSR was partially resolved in 1924.

On December 6, 1926 Gomel and Rechitsa districts were attached to Belarus. The territory of BSSR was 125.7 thousand km<sup>2</sup> with a population of 4,980,000 people.

On January 15, 1938 in BSSR as in the USSR the regional division was entered. BSSR had 5 regions: Vitebsk, Mogilev, Gomel, Minsk and Polesie.

#### *B) Approval of a one-party system.*

Three main points characterized the period between October 1917 and Lenin's death (January 1924):

1. The growing power in the hands of a governing party center (Politburo).
2. The transformation of the party from the revolutionary organization aimed at the overthrow of the autocracy in the leading core of the government and administrative machinery.
3. Creation of monopoly position for the Bolshevik Party by eliminating the other parties.

Until the early 20-ies political parties existed. Self-destruction of the Bund was happened in March, 1921. The Belarusian Socialist Revolutionary Party (the most influential among the national movements) dissolved in June, 1924.

Development of party life took place on the line from democracy to dictatorship.



Party Congress was formally the supreme body. It was about a year, but Congress was too cumbersome for the effective exercise of power and its holding was rare for this. Its value gradually decreased. Power was concentrated «in the hands» of the Central Committee but it did not hold on to power which went to the smaller and more efficient forms. The Politburo (the main source of political decisions) was elected from the Central Committee. There were created by the Orgburo (the Organizational Bureau), which carried out all the organizational work, and the Secretariat of the Central Committee, consisting of the executive secretary and 5 technical secretaries. Responsible Secretary (from April 3, 1922 — Stalin) was included in the Organizational Bureau and the Politburo (the Political Bureau).

Questions of party discipline also passed under the jurisdiction of the Secretariat.

In 1921 a resolution «On Party Unity» (prohibition of factions within the party) was adopted at X Congress. Since then it could be criticized someone in the party, but to organize opposition to the majority was forbidden. Congress has given the authority to the Central Committee to use all of measures, up to expulsion from the party. The value of the Secretariat of the Central Committee was constantly growing. Soviets' role in making decision fell, as they spent the general line of the party, which was formed in the Politburo.

#### **6.4. Belarusization: its essence and content**

Belarusization is the policy of national-state and national-cultural development in the Belarusian SSR.

*Prerequisites of Belarusization.*

The publishing house «Belarus» was created on January 18, 1921.

The Belarusian State University was opened on October 30, 1921 (the first rector was V. Picheta).

X Congress of the RCP (b), which decided not only on the introduction of the NEP, but also raised the question of the development of the national borderlands, contributed to this policy.

The purpose of the RCP (b) in this policy was to strengthen its influence on the outskirts of the former empire and the presentation of the teachings of Marxism-Leninism in local languages.

In 1922 Institute of Agriculture in Gorky and the Belarusian Institute of Culture were opened, which since January 1, 1929 was transformed into the Academy of Sciences of BSSR (the first president of the Academy of Sciences of BSSR was V. Ignatovskiy, vice-president — Ya. Kolas).

Policy of belarusization officially conducted since 1924 (decision of XI session of the CEC of BSSR. Resolution was dated on July 15, «On the practical arrangements for a national policy»). In July, 1924 the Central Commission (Commission were also set up at the district executive committees) was created for the Belarusization. It was headed by A. Khatskevich.

Belarusization primarily provided for the restoration of civil rights of the Belarusian language. Its study began by the staff of party, government and public bodies. If acquisition of the Belarusian language in the central institutions went fairly quickly, in the district and region was much worse. The audit showed that at the end of 1925 44, 5 % of the employees did not know the Belarusian language. Therefore it was decided to take the most stringent measures against those who did not know the language, including dismissal from work.

Belarusization of schools successfully conducted. In the 1926–27 academic year 4576 national schools with 4 and 7-year courses were in Belarus. Among them — 4201 Belarusian, 189 Jewish, 117 Polish, 40 Russian, 19 Latvian, 6 Lithuanian, 3 German and 1 Estonian.

Belarusization of armed forces also occurred (Order №1 dated December 25, 1928).

At the same time national and cultural interests of non-indigenous inhabitants took into account. In heavily populated by minorities districts national councils established. By 1928, Belarus had 23 Jewish, 19 Polish, 16 Russian, 5 Latvian, 2 Ukrainian and 2 German councils. Official languages during Belarusization were announced Belarusian, Russian, Jewish and Polish.

Local history received wide development. The number of local history organizations was growing. In 1927 their number reached 240, covering 10 thousand people.

A policy of korenization (indigenization) was implemented (nomination of representatives of local people to leadership positions in the country).

The first results of belarusization were announced in 1928. Conclusion: it was supported by the broad masses of the working people. The next task was to enter the Belarusian language in the daily lives of people.

However, the company to expose national democracy began since the late 20's. Initially, it was treated as a tendency to put national interests above class, develop national culture to the detriment of its proletarian content. Then evaluation became more acute, to draw analogies with the national fascism, which sought to restore the bourgeois system. Repression began in the country. The case of «Union of liberation of Belarus» was fabricated. In 1931 the case was sentenced to 90 people. In 1937 they were tried again and sentenced to death.

## **6.5. Formation of Soviet culture**

*The liquidation of illiteracy. The creation of the Soviet education system.*

Liquidation of illiteracy was one of the most important tasks of the national-cultural development. In 1920 in BSSR 673 illiterate accounted per 1000 people. In December, 1920 a special commission to eliminate illiteracy was created (later the same committee set up in counties and townships). In 1924 a partnership «Down with illiteracy» was created. According to population census of 1926 literate in the country was 53.1 %. Education took politicized (to promote the ideas of socialism).

Libraries became public. In 1921 a library of BSU was opened (from 1926 State Library of the Belarusian SSR). Importance of the mass media was also increased. 20 newspapers and 15 magazines were published in BSSR in 1925 of which 11 newspapers and 10 magazines in the Belarusian language.

Economic and cultural development in the country required a greater number of specialists. On October 30, 1921 in Minsk the Belarusian State University was opened with faculties of medical and social sciences, pedagogical (1922), the national economy and Soviet law (1925). The first rector of BSU V. Picheta, Commissar of education of BSSR V. Ignatovskiy carried out greater organizational, pedagogical and scientific work. Ya. Kolas (Mickevich) worked as a teacher at BSU.

The Belarusian State Institute of Agriculture and Forestry was created in 1922. It was merged with Goritskiy agricultural institute in 1925. As a result, the Belarusian Agricultural Academy was formed.

The main type of specialized secondary schools was technical school (college). In 1921 pedagogical colleges were opened in Minsk, Borisov, Bobruisk, and later in Mozyr, Petrikov, Cherven. And other types of colleges were opened (agricultural, music, economic, etc.). In 1929 there were 32 colleges. The basis of the acquisition of institutes and colleges was put class principle. To help to enter higher education workers' schools were organized (three workers' school were in 1926).

In 1922 school reform was carried out. 7-year-old secondary school was introduced instead of 9-year-old. Universal compulsory education for children aged 8 to 11 years was introduced since 1926.

#### *The development of literature.*

In the 20s it was a time of occurrence and control of various cultural currents, recognized freedom of search content, artistic form, no diktat of the state. But the second half of 20s cultural sphere was begun to tightly control.

Central place in the development of culture belonged to writers. They were grouped by creative and artistic direction. In 1924 All-Belarusian union of poets and writers «Maladnyak» arose (Aleksandrovich, Golovach, Zvonak, Lynkov, Charot, etc.). They saw themselves as the organization of proletarian writers.

In 1926 writers Babareka, Byadulya, Glebko, Krapiva, Chorny came from «Maladnyak» and created the «Uzvysshsha». They criticized nihilistic attitude of «Maladnyak» to cultural heritage and pay more attention to national specificities.

In 1927 a literary association «Polymya» was formed (Kolas, Kupala, Zhi-lunovich, Zaretsky etc.). This association recognized high social mission of literature, it became the center of a deterrent that balances extreme tendencies.

In 1928 «Belarusian Association of Proletarian Writers» was created. Objective: concentration of literary forces to better support the building of socialism.

#### *Development of the theater.*

Belarusian Drama Theatre of E. Mirovich was formed in 1920 (from 1926 renamed the BST-1 (the Belarusian State Theatre), from 1944 named theatre of Yanka

Kupala, from 1955 — Academic). Not only the classics, but the Belarusian productions staged in the theatre («Raskidanae gnyazdo» («Scattered nest») by Ya. Kolas, «Na Kupalle» by M. Charot, «Masheka» and «Kastus Kalinovski» by E. Mirovich).

In 1921 «Belarusian drama studio» started up in Moscow. Its graduates created the second Belarusian State Theatre (BST-2), which opened in 1926 in Vitebsk (1944 – theatre of Ya. Kolas, 1977 – Academic).

In 1920 Belarusian theater troupe of V. Golubok began working, which grew out of amateur groups (from 1926 to 1932 — «Belarusian mobile theater», 1932 — BST-3, 1937 — Gomel city theatre).

## **TOPIC 7**

### **BELARUS IN THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR**

#### **7.1. The initial period of hostilities**

On December 18, 1940 Hitler signed a plan of attack on the Soviet Union (USSR), codenamed «Barbarossa».

The special plan «East» planned to destroy 120–140 million people for 25–30 years. It was planned to destroy 75 % of Belarusian population, the rest sterilized and kept as slaves.

The beginning of the Great Patriotic War was on June 22, 1941.

The Germans were advancing in three directions:

1st. — Group of Army North (Commander G. von Leeb) led the offensive in the direction of the Baltic States-Leningrad.

2nd. — Group of Army Centre (Commander T. von Bock) — in the direction of Minsk-Moscow.

3rd. — Group of Army South (Commander G. von Rundstedt) — in the direction of Kiev.

The Germans planned to enter the line Astrakhan-Arkhangelsk and for 1–2 months to finish the war.

The group of army Center came in Belarus. The main blow was struck in two directions: Brest and Grodno. The defense had been broken. Particularly cruel battles were fought in the area of the Brest Fortress. Already on June 26, 1941 German mechanized units came to Minsk. The troops of the 13th Army (commanded by Lieutenant General Filatov) kept the defense. On June 28, Minsk was captured by the Germans. The defense of Mogilev continued from 3 to 26 July, from 5 to 11 July — Vitebsk. At the same time there was fighting on the approach of Gomel and Orsha.

The Soviet Army tried to conduct counterattacks. On July, 6 counterattack was applied by the 5th and 7th mechanized corps of troops of the 20th Army (commanded by Lieutenant General Kurochkin) in Lepel district. The major tank battle held near the village Syenno. The Germans were pushed back to 30–40 km. But on the approach of Lepel Soviet troops were stopped and most of the

troops were surrounded. Only a small part of the troops came out from the besiegement in Orsha district.

Offensive Rogochevo-Zhlobinskaya operation was carried out by forces of the 21st Army (commanded by Colonel General Kuznetsov). The purpose of the operation was to stop and hold the enemy near river Dnepr. German troops were pushed back to 20–30 km in the direction of Bobruisk. But the Germans transferred troops, and the operation was not developed.

The battle for Gomel was on August, 12–19. Mozyr was taken on August, 22.

By September, 1941 the whole territory of Belarus was occupied.

Reasons for the failure of Soviet troops in the initial phase:

- Repression in the army before the war. During the repression 40 thousand officers was killed, including 7 of 9 — marshals, 600 generals. By 1941 only 7 % of the supreme command had higher military education.

- Errors in estimates of the military-strategic position: Soviet troops at the border were deployed for the attack and did not prepare for defensive action; partisan (guerrilla) bases, created in the 30-s, were destroyed; old line of defense «Stalin Line» eliminated but new one had not yet built after the accession of western Ukraine and Belarus.

- Dictatorial autocracy of Stalin.

## **7.2. Political, economic and military measures of invaders in the country**

Occupants rejected all legal international norms and established the so-called «new order» — the colonial regime of lawlessness and looting. The state of emergency and the system of hostages were entered. The special economic staff OST with a large number of business teams was created for robbery in Belarus. Official working hours were equal to 10–12 hours. In order to eliminate the statehood of Belarus territorial-administrative partition was held. Territories of Vitebsk, Mogilev, most part of Gomel, the eastern regions of Minsk and some areas of Polesie areas were ceded to the Administration of the rear of Group of Army Centre. Almost entirely Polesie, Pinsk and Brest regions with Mozyr, Pinsk and Brest were added to Reichskommissariat Ukraine. Bialystok region, part of the Baranovichi, northern areas of Brest region became part of East Prussia. North-western regions of Vileika region became part of the General okrug (an administrative division) Lithuania. The General okrug Belarus (GOB) made up the rest of the territory of Belarus. Of the 192 districts included in the Belorussian SSR 68 entered in the GOB. GOB was divided into 10 gebite (okrugs). Each gebite had several kreis (district). GOB was part of Reichskommissariat Ostland with the center in Riga.

On September 1, 1941 GOB headed by Wilhelm Kube. He sought to acquire support among Belarusians (collaborationists, who tried to have cooperation with the enemy against one's country in wartime).

On October 22, 1941 Belarusian People's Self-Help (BPS) was created by order of Kube. This organization established its territorial unit in the form of regional, district and village departments. Consent was given to participate in educational and cultural activities. In July, 1942 Kube allowed the creation of the Main Rada BPS headed by I. Ermochenko. The staff was created which was ready to take power from the hands of the German administration. In the same month with the filing of Kube BPS began to create Belarusian defense corps (BDC). It was planned in each district to create a unit of BDC from company to battalion (all 3 divisions). Training courses was opened for Belarusian officers. 20 battalions were formed by 1943, but the Germans were virtually unarmed. Troops of BDC were unfit for action, and in the autumn of 1943 Germans disbanded them.

On June 22, 1943 organization «Union of Belarusian youth» (UBY) was established, headed by M.Ganko and N.Abramova, which had its own printed organ «Long Live Belarus».

On September 23, 1943 W. Kube was killed by Belarusian underground workers (M. Osipova, N. Troyan, E. Mazannik). GOB was headed by General of SS K. von Gottberg. Belarusian Central Rada was created (BCR) in December, 1943, as an auxiliary and advisory part of the German administration in Belarus. R. Ostrovski became president BCR.

On February 23, 1944 Gauleiter K. von Gottberg ordered, at the suggestion of BCR, to start organizing Belarusian Home Defence (BHD) for fight against communism. The mobilization of the male population 1908–1924 years of birth was declared. For failure to appear on the agenda was the death penalty. At the end of April, 1944 45 battalions were formed. Commander of BHD was Major Franz Kushal, and his deputy — Lieutenant Vitaly Mikula. But there was a mass desertion from the BHD (went to the partisans).

After the liberation of Belarus leaders of BCR fled to Berlin in 1945 and created a team of SS «Belarus» (1094 persons).

### **7.3. Organization of the underground movement and partisan's warfare**

Belarusian partisan detachments began to appear in the summer of 1941. Among them Pinsky detachment under the command of V. Korzh was, region group «Red October» was active in Polesie. Its leaders T. Bumazhkov and F. Pavlovski became the first Soviet partisans-heroes (on August 6, 1941). The detachment of M. Shmyrev (Father Minai) successfully operated in Surozhski district. In all 60 partisan units and groups were operated in 1941.

In July-August, 1941 the Germans carried out the first large-scale punitive operation «Prypiat marshes» resulting of this 13 788 people were killed.

Expansion of the partisan movement was contributed by the defeat of the Germans near Moscow. A characteristic feature of the partisan movement in 1942 was the release of the fairly large territories and the establishment of the partisan zones there. This zone appeared in the October district of the Polesie region in January-

February, 1942 under control so-called «Pavlovsk's garrison» (more than 1400 people). In March, 1942 Krichev partisan unity was created with the operations center which 17 detachments were subordinate to. In the same way the union of partisan groups went in other places in Belarus. Communication with the Big land (it's 40-km break at the junction of armies «North» and «Center», not controlled by the Germans from February to September 1942) was through the Surazh gates.

In May, 1942 Central staff of the partisan movement was established, headed by the First Secretary of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Belarus P. Ponomarenko.

In September, 1942 Belarusian staff of the partisan movement was created, headed by the Second Secretary of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Belarus P. Kalinin. These agencies supervised and coordinated partisan movement.

In 1943–1944 the large-scale operation conducted throughout the territory of Belarus, which came to be known as «rail war», which consisted of three stages: I — August-September 1943, II — September-the beginning of November 1943, III — on June 20, 1944 – July 28, 1944. This operation involved almost all partisan union of Belarus. The partisans blasted over 20,000 rails, in response Nazis during 1943 organized 60 large punitive operations (total for years of occupation — 140).

Simultaneously the partisan movement and underground fight unfolded. Even before the full occupation of the republic in 89 districts underground partorgans have been created. And regional partorgans stayed in 4 regions (Gomel, Mogilev, Minsk, Pinsk). Komsomol members and the Communists acted as an organizational core of the underground struggle. In November, 1941 Gomel underground headed by T. Borodin, R. Timofeenko, I. Shilov organized an explosion in the restaurant, which destroyed several dozen officers and general.

Group of K. Zaslonov acted effectively on the Orsha railroad. In December, 1941 they were out of action a few dozen locomotives with briquette-coal mines.

On July 30, 1943 the largest diversification of World War II was made on the Osipovichi railroad. The blast destroyed 4 echelons, including 1 tank «Tiger», 31 fuel tanks, 63 wagons of ammunition, air bombs, mines.

#### **7.4. Belarus in the last period of the war. Liberation of Belarus**

The process of radical change in the war which was begun at Stalingrad was finally enshrined in the summer of 1943 during the Battle of Kursk. Counterattack at Kursk grew into a general offensive from the Velikiye Luki to the Black sea. The Dnieper was boosted. On September 23, 1943 the first regional center of Belarus Komarin was released. On September, 26 — Khotimsk, 28 — Klimovichi, 30 — Krichev.

Belarusian direction tucked in up to 70 German divisions.

On November 26, 1943 the troops of the 1st Byelorussian Front (commanded by Rokossovski) liberated Gomel, which leadership BSSR immediately moved.

In January-February, 1944 Kalinkovichy, Mozyr, Rogachev were released. This completed the autumn-winter offensive of the Soviet troops.

Plan for the defeat of Group of Army «Center» was approved in May 1944 and was named «Operation Bagration». The plan provided to deliver powerful offensive strikes by forces of 4 fronts: 1st Baltic, 1, 2 and 3 of the First Byelorussian Front (commanded by generals I. Bagramyan, K. Rokossovsky, G. Zakharov, I. Chernyachovsky); Dnieper navy, 1st Polish Army and Air Force. Great importance was attached to direct participation in the Battle of the Belarusian partisans (III stage of «rail war»). The configuration of the front which was developed by June 1944 called «Belarusian balcony».

The operation involved to break through the German defenses in the Central sector of the Soviet-German front, to dismember troops of armies «Center» and defeat them separately. General management of operation were carried out by G. Zhukov and A. Vasilevsky.

Soviet troops quantitatively exceeded the enemy in manpower 2 times, in guns and mortars — 3.8 times, tanks and aircraft — 3.9 times.

On June 23, 1944 the operation started. The offensive was successful, and on July, 3 Minsk was released. 105-thousand groups of German troops were surrounded to the east of Minsk. On July 28, 1944 the liberation of Belarus was culminated by taking Brest. On August 29 Soviet troops reached the suburb of Warsaw — Prague. «Operation Bagration» was over.

German losses were about 500 thousand, Soviet troops — about 766 thousand.

The outcome of the war for Belarus: 2.2 million people died, 628 villages were burned, 380 thousand people were exported for work in Germany, 209 cities and towns were destroyed, 10 thousand companies, almost all power plants were ruined, etc.

Overall material losses amounted to 35 annual budgets of the republic of 1940.

## TOPIC 8

### BSSR IN THE SECOND HALF OF XX CENTURY

#### 8.1. Socio-political development of the country in the 50s-80s

On February 14–25, 1956 XX party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) was held which took a number of decisions aimed at improving the situation in industry, agriculture, science and culture. The Congress declared departure from only a negative attitude toward the West. At the Congress Stalin's personality cult was voiced sharp criticism.

After XX party Congress rehabilitation of the victims of Stalinist repression began in Belarus. From 1956 to 1962 29012 people were rehabilitated in



BSSR. Among them were Knorin, Gikalo, Goloded, Krinitski, Uborevich, Sharangovich and others.

In the country attempts has made to upgrade the administrative-command system (1956–1964).

From December 1962 reorganization of party and government bodies conducted on the economic principle. The content was to enter a direct branch responsible party (it disposed of in 1964).

Expansion of rights of the republics happened. Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU and Council of Ministers of the USSR was written in May, 1956, according many businesses and organizations were passed at the disposal of republics that previously obeyed directly to Central ministries. Only 356 such enterprises were transferred at the disposal of BSSR in 1956, more than 500 — in 1957. In March 1957 the law was adopted according to the republics could address issues of regional and administrative-territorial construction.

Legal rights of the republics expanded. They could make their own civil, criminal and procedural lawbook.

On October 14, 1964 N. S. Khrushchev was removed from his post at the plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU. Leonid Brezhnev became General Secretary of the party. His name was associated with the growth of stagnation.

The role of the party was constantly growing, as reflected in the Constitution of the USSR adopted in 1977 (6th article was about the position of the party's leading role in society).

There was dissident movement (dissido — «disagree»). In 1968 Academician Sakharov called for renewed socialism (exiled to Gorkiy). In 1974 Solzhenitsyn was expelled to the United States of America. There was a growing personality cult of Brezhnev, corruption at the highest levels. Republic during this period was headed by K. Mazur from 1956 to 1965, from 1965 to 1980 — P. Masherau (made the largest contribution to the development of the country), from 1980 to 1983 — T. Kiselev, who had 20 years as head of the Council of Ministers, from 1983 to 1987 — N. Slyunkov.

## **8.2. Socio-economic development of BSSR in the 50s-80s**

Industrial development of BSSR in the 50–80s took place in the scientific and technological revolution sweeping the developed countries in the world.

In 1965 at the initiative of the Prime Minister of the USSR A. Kosygin it was decided to launch economic reform, which was aimed at improving the principles of economic management. The main components of the reform:

- introduction of sectoral principle of management in industry;
- the number of planned indicators of enterprises of ministries was reduced to 9;
- the main indicator of the enterprise was the realization of products, and not the gross production;

- enterprises set up special funds from the profits of the enterprise, the funds of which were directed to the development of production, material incentives for workers, in the social sphere;
- enterprises were exempt from the excessive stocks of raw materials and equipment.

Initially, the reform gave a result that was manifested in the results of the VIII Five Year Plan (1966–1970). During this time, the volume of industrial production of BSSR increased in 1.8 times. The annual growth rate of industrial production amounted to 12.4 %.

Oil industry was established based on opened in 1964–1965 Rechitskoye and Ostashkovichi deposits.

Importance of small industrial cities (Svetlogorsk, Novopolotsk, etc.) grew.

But in the early 70s reform stopped to produce results, as all these measures were confined to private setting and did not affect the essence of the Soviet economy. Since the early 70-ies difficulties in the development of the national economy began to grow.

Economy of BSSR continued to develop by extensive way. During the 70th — the first half of the 80s in BSSR more than 170 companies were put into operation.

In 1984 the 1st stage of Minsk subway went into operation. The construction of pipeline transport continued. Gas pipeline Torzhok-Ivatsevichi, oil pipeline from Polotsk was introduced to the oil depot in Vitebsk and Minsk regions.

*Agriculture.* The state of agriculture in the second half of the 50s was determined by the development of collective and sovkhoz (abbreviated from Soviet farm) system. In comparison to 1951 gross production increased 2.2 times until 1958. Since the early 60-ies (1961–1962) farmers began to receive a pension.

Overall, however, the republic's agriculture developed slowly, the economic situation of the majority of state and collective farms remained grave.

Attempt to develop an effective agricultural policy was the decisions of the March Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU in 1965. They included measures to increase investment in agriculture, increase delivery of machinery in collective and state farms, raising purchase prices for agricultural products. The village received a large number of machinery, land reclamation, land application of chemicals was carried out, specialization of production was turned.

There were 87.8 thousand trucks, 131.2 thousand tractors, 34.9 thousand combine harvesters in the agriculture of the republic at the end of 1985. However, it was not a decent return on the whole. The rate of growth of agricultural production was steadily falling.

The situation was complicated by the heavy losses already prepared agricultural products during its transportation, processing and storage. Thus, in the 70-ies loss of grain composition were 20 %, potatoes — 49 %, vegetables — 33 %.

The reasons for this situation were the extensive development and command-and-control methods.

### **8.3. Chernobyl — a threat to the gene pool of the Republic of Belarus**

There was an accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in the second hour of the night on April 26, 1986. This accident was the result of a technological backwardness of the USSR, serious errors in the development of nuclear energy.

70 % of all substances from the explosion settled on the territory of Belarus. To the contaminated areas or affected areas were assigned plots of land in Russia (0.6 % of its territory), Ukraine (5 %), in Belarus (23 % (2100 thousand people = 54 district in Gomel, Mogilev, Brest, Minsk and Grodno regions). The country's economy suffered huge losses. More than 22 % of agricultural land (18 thousand km<sup>2</sup>), almost 15 % of the forests were derived from an economic use. Total costs amounted to 16 national budgets of the country (or 100 billion rubles). Ukraine to minimize the consequences of the explosion of its remaining nuclear power plant spent annually from 5.8 to 6.4 % of the annual budget but Belarus — from 13.6 to 22 %.

In 1990 the Supreme Council of BSSR considered and approved a long-term state program to overcome the results of the Chernobyl disaster in 1990–1995 years, which was developed by the government. The program included the allocation 18 billion rubles to BSSR from the Union budget. In 1986–1989 for this purpose had been used only 1.1 billion rubles.

In 1991–1992 The Supreme Council of the Republic of Belarus adopted a number of new laws aimed at providing support for people who were affected by the Chernobyl disaster. This was such laws as the «Law on social protection of citizens who suffered from the Chernobyl disaster», the law «On the status of the territories that were exposed to radioactive contamination» and so on. The main attention was paid to the resettlement of people from the affected areas and their arrangement on the new location.

### **8.4. The development of culture in the second half of XX century**

At the end of the 50s changes occurred in the field of education.

In December, 1958 the law «On strengthening the connection between school and life, and the further development of the public education system in the USSR» was passed. Instead of a 7-year universal education was introduced 8-year. High school became 11-year with mandatory production training.

10-year education was again introduced in 1964. Vocational training became unnecessary since 1966 because most schools did not have the necessary material base.

In 1970–1971 the elementary school was the 3-year. A systematic course of the fundamentals of science began teaching a class 4. As a result, many primary schools, especially in villages, were closed.

Negative points: 1) school programs were very difficult, which led to an overload of pupils; 2) command dogmatic pedagogy; 3) strengthened policy further prohibition of the use of the Belarusian language in school.

Universal 10-year secondary education was introduced in 1977.

Mid-level professionals in the country were prepared by 139 technical schools and colleges (1985), of which 18 medical schools.

Higher education.

There were 33 high schools, including 3 universities in the country by 1985: in Gomel (from 1969), Grodno (from 1978) and the Belarusian State University (from 1921).

*Culture.*

*Literature.* 2nd half of the 50s – early 60-ies was period so-called «chrushchovskaya thaw». This was due to debunking the cult of Stalin's personality and the rehabilitation of victims of repression; T. Gartny (Zhilunovich), P. Golovach, A. Dudar, M. Zaretsky, M. Charot and others again began to publish their works.

Many writers returned from the camps: V. Dubovka, Ya. Pushcha, S. Shushkevich, S. Grakhovski and others. Critical rethinking the complex problems of history and modernity brought a new generation of writers: A. Adamovich, V. Bykov, R. Baradulin, V. Korotkevich, I. Naumenko, I. Chigrinov and so on (Union of Writers of BSSR consisted of 364 people in the 1985).

Despite some political liberalization authorities intervened in the creative life. Works of Kulakovski «Dobroseltsy» (1958) was subjected to sharp criticism. The author was accused of distorting the life of the village, in the distortion of Soviet reality. Kulakovski was removed from the post of chief editor of «Maladost». However, the creative process was continued.

I. Melezh wrote novels «Lyudzi na balotse» («People in the swamp»), «Podyh navalnitsy» («Breathing of thunderstorm»). He received the Lenin Prize for this work in 1972.

M. Tank awarded the Lenin Prize in 1978 for the collection of poems «Narachanski sosny» («Naroch pines»).

I. Shamyakin published novels «Serca na daloni» («The Heart on the Open Palm») in 1963, «Atlanty i karyjatydy» («Telamones and Caryatides») in 1974, «Vazmu tvoj bol» («I will take your pain») in 1979 and others. In 1981 he was awarded an the Star of hero of Socialist Labor.

K. Krapiva wrote plays «Lyudzi i dzyably» («People and Devils»), «Brama nyamyaruchastsi», «Na vstryi» («On the blade»). In 1975 he became the Hero of Socialist Labor. P. Brovka, M. Tank, V. Bykov were also awarded the title of Hero.

In the 70–80-ies a new generation (V. Neklyayev, A. Rozanov, Dudarev and others) came in the literature.

In March 1972 publishing house «Fiction» was based, in January 1981 — publishing house «Youth».

*Music.* Yu.Semenyaka wrote opera «Kalyuchaya ruzha» («Barbed rose»), «Kali apadaye listye» («When the leaves are falling»), «Zorka Venera» («Venus Star»), «Novaya zyamlya» («New Land»); D. Smolski: opera «Sivaya legenda» («Ash grey legend»), «Francisk Skaryna»; S.Kortes: opera «Giordano Bruno», «Matuchna Courage». L. Zachlevny, I. Luchenok, E. Hanok worked in the song genre.

*Television.* Regular television broadcasts began since 1956. Gomel regional studio began working since 1958.

*Fine arts.* M. Savitski's works were widely known (he was a former concentration camp inmate) — «Bread», «Partisans», «Vitebsk Gate», «Partisan Madonna», etc. Savitski was awarded the title of People's Artist of the Belarusian SSR (1977), People's Artist of the USSR (1978), Hero of Socialist Labor, and so on.

*Sculpture.* In 1969 a memorial and architectural complex «Khatyn» was opened. It was created by architects Y. Gradov, B. Zankovich, L. Levin, S. Selikhanov.

The memorial complex «Brest Fortress» (1971, A. Bembel, V. Zankovich, V. Bobyl); «Mound of Glory» near Minsk (1969, A. Bembel); Memorial Soviet-Polish military cooperation in Mogilev region (village Lenino); Memorial «Breakthrough» (A. Anikeichik) in Ushachi district in Vitebsk region were also opened.

## **TOPIC 9. SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF BSSR IN THE 90 YEARS OF XX CENTURY — BEGINNING OF XXI CENTURY**

### **9.1. The policy of «perestroika» and economic transformation**

Socio-economic development of the Belarusian SSR took place under the influence of «perestroika» and acceleration discussed at the plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in April, 1985 and the XXVII Congress of the party, which was held on February 25 – March 6, 1986. Accordingly, a comprehensive program of economic development was developed in the 12th Five-Year Plan (1986–1990) in the country. It was planned to increase the national income by 26 %.

In June, 1987 reform was declared, after which the country began restructuring the economic mechanism. Already in 1987 many labor groups began to work in conditions of full cost accounting and self-financing. Diktat of center was weakened, independence increased. Instead plan the enterprises received a state order plan. Under the new conditions the relationship between the enterprises began to build on contractual obligations. As a result, several enterprises improved its production indicators.

But by the end of the 12th Five-Year Plan reform began to «slip» and turned into a crisis. And this was contributed by the following reasons: 1) the production relations through agreement on supply chain between each other did not properly be adjusted; 2) the set of labor collectives, based on the law «about en-

terprises», began to curtail production and to increase the wage funds, which contributed to inflation; 3) the concept of economic acceleration was thought shallow. Outpacing the growth of mechanical engineering (in relation to the whole industry in the 2 times) required even faster to develop the production of equipment for mechanical engineering; 4) the Chernobyl accident and the earthquake in Armenia have created major unforeseen financial costs; 5) world oil prices decreased; 6) antialcoholic company has undermined the country's finances; 7) inconsistency, halfness, the inability of economists and business executives to root unconventional economic policies; 8) breakdown of the USSR completed the crisis. The Republic was dependent on the supply of raw materials and components from the outside. Rupture of economic ties occurred. A lot of companies were stopped.

In 1992 Government liberalized prices, which robbed the majority of the population. In such circumstances, market economy started to take shape.

## **9.2. The democratization of social and political life**

Approaches to democratization of political life implemented in close connection with the socio-economic reforms. The course was embarked on publicity.

In December, 1988 a law «On Elections» was adopted, which was filmed by a limit on the number of candidates.

On March 26, 1989 elections of People's Deputies of the USSR were held. 60 deputies were elected from BSSR.

On March 4, 1990 elections were held to the Supreme Council of the Belarusian SSR. They were on an alternative basis. Competition was intense. In May, 1990 session of the Supreme Council of BSSR elected the chairman N. I. Dementey. After August, 1991 (Coup of Emergency Committee) Dementey resigned. In September, 1991 S. Shushkevich was elected as a chairman, whose M. I. Grib replaced on January 28, 1994.

Factions and opposition arose in the Supreme Soviet in an atmosphere of openness, fighting different views.

On January 1, 1991 a law «On Public Associations» was adopted in the USSR, which allowed the creation of political parties and public organizations. There was a «Belarusian Popular Front» (founding Congress was held on June 24–25, 1989), «Volnaye zgartavanne vayskoutsau» (patriotic organization established in 1989), «National Democratic Party of Belarus» (originated in June, 1990) «United Democratic Party of Belarus» (originated in September, 1990), «The Belarusian Social Democratic Hramada» (originated in March, 1991), «Belarusian Peasant Party» (February, 1991), «Joint Agrarian Democratic Party of Belarus» (June, 1992), «The party of the national consent» (March, 1992), «Belarusian Christian-Democratic Union» (June, 1991), «The Party of Communists of Belarus» (originated in December, 1991, the successor of the CPB), «Slavic Fest White Russia» (June, 1992), the party «Belarusian Research and

Production Congress» (October, 1992), «Green Party of Belarus» (December, 1992), «The Republican Party of Labor and Justice» (1992) and others.

In October, 1990 XIX Congress of Soviet Trade Unions was held, which announced the elimination of All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions. Instead, it was established All-Union Trade Union Confederation. In Belarus there were the following trade union organizations: «Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus» (October, 1990, the largest union), «Confederation of Labour of Belarus» (April, 1991), «The Independent Miners' Union of Belarus» (October, 1991, brings together the work teams Soligorsk mines), «Free Trade Unions of Belarus» (November, 1991).

### **9.3. The declaration of independence of the Republic of Belarus**

As already noted, democratization of society, publicity, ideological and political pluralism got its development in the years of «perestroika». At this time, politicization of the masses significantly increased. Question about relations between the center and the Union Republics widely discussed. Representatives of the Union republics insisted on renegotiating the treaty of alliance of 1922 on a new basis. Center pulled and did not give an answer. Then in March, 1990 the Supreme Council of Lithuania declared about its full independence. For Lithuanians Latvians and Estonians were taken the same steps.

On July 27, 1990 session of the Supreme Council of BSSR adopted the Declaration of State Sovereignty.

On March 17, 1991 a referendum was held about the fate of the USSR. In BSSR 82.7 % of participating in the vote voted for maintaining an updated Union. Preparations have begun for the signing of a new union treaty (Novo-Ogarevo process).

On August 19–21, 1991 there was a coup («putsch»), after the elimination of which on August 25, 1991 V extraordinary session of the Supreme Council of BSSR announced the political and economic independence of BSSR and gave the status of a constitutional law of the Declaration of State Sovereignty of BSSR. On September 19, 1991 The Supreme Council of the Republic of Belarus adopted the law «On national emblem» and «On the national flag». On October 18, 1991 — the law «On Citizenship of Belarus».

On December 8, 1991 the leaders of Belarus, Ukraine and Russia (Shushkevich, Kravchuk and Yeltsin) signed the Belavezha Accords. The essence of the agreement was the denunciation of the Union Treaty of 1922 and the creation of the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States).

On December 10, 1991 the Supreme Council of the Republic of Belarus ratified these treaties.

On March 15, 1994 a new Constitution of Belarus was adopted.

On July 10, 1994 Belarus became a presidential republic.

From 9 to 24 November, 1996 a referendum was held on the initiative of president Alexander Lukashenko about additions to the Constitution. Russian language was given the status of the state together with Belarusian. Presidential powers expanded: to appoint and remove the top positions, appoint six judges of the Constitutional Court and its chairman, appoint eight members of the Council of the Republic. Instead of the Supreme Council (260 people) parliament — the National Assembly was established, which consisted of two chambers: the House of Representatives (110 members) and the Council of the Republic — Chamber of territorial representation, that is, from each region and Minsk at meetings of deputies of local councils elected by secret ballot by 8 people in the Council of the Republic. A total of 64 senators. The term of full powers of the Parliament is 4 years. Chambers assemble is for two sessions a year. On October, 2 it's a period not exceeding 80 days, on April, 2 — 90 days.

In 1999 the signing of the agreement on the establishment of the state union between Belarus and Russia took place.

#### **9.4. Development of culture at the present stage**

On June 27, 1989 the Francisk Skaryna Belarusian Language Society was created which was led by Nil Gilevich. From March 3, 1990 Society published the newspaper «Our word». The purpose of the organization was the revival of the Belarusian language.

On January 26, 1990 a law «On Language» was passed. Belarusian language was recognized as the official language of the republic, Russian language was as the interethnic communication (in 1996 after the referendum Russian language has also been given the status of state).

The writers' organization was at the head of the national revival was, which amounted to 432 members in 1994. Many writers in this period turned to historical theme.

Leonid Daineko wrote «Sword of Prince Vyachko», «Trail of the Werewolf», «Iron acorns».

Konstantin Tarasov published «Memory about the legends», «Pursuit on Grunwald», «Three Ragneda's lives».

Henrych Dolidovich in his novels «Host-stone», «Awakened» told about the fate of BPR.

Vasil Bykov in the stories «Stsyuzha» («Severe cold»), «Stsyana» («The Wall») examined the fate of the Belarusian people in the twentieth century. The psychology of people in the years of Stalinist repression was analyzed in the story «Zhouty pyasochak» («Yellow sand»).

The theme of our time, including Chernobyl, was turned by writer Ivan Shamyakin (novel «Wicked star», stories «Victim», «Satan's tour», «Fosterling»).

Svetlana Alerseevich was a winner of the prestigious literary awards «European was understanding», «The honor and dignity in the literature». Her



works «War is not a woman's face», «Zinc boys», «Chernobyl prayer — chronicle of the future» got an international fame.

Works of Belarusian emigrants began to publish (Sednief, Arsenyev, Vitbich, Akula and others).

*Poetry.* Nil Gilevich wrote a collection of poems «Independence»; Grigory Baradulin — a collection «Mercy chopping block».

To the historical heritage of the Belarusian people such artists turned: brothers Vladimir and Michael Basalygo created a gallery of portraits of Belarusian princes. A. Marochkin created a series of portraits of Belarusian culture (N. Gusovsky, F. Skaryna, E. of Polotsk and others). Vladimir Stelmashonok created a gallery of portraits of princes Radziwill. Also Leonid Shchemelev, Gavriil Vashchenko, Nikolai Seleshchuk worked in the historical genre. Nikolai Kuzmich extolled in his paintings female beauty devoted to the «Belarusian Madonna».

The Belarusian theater art were created «Kazimir Lyshchynski» by Vladimir Butromeev; «Cross of Euphrosyne of Polatsk» by Irina Maslyanitsina, «Ping — not prayer» by Ivan Chigrinov; «Song of the great bison» by Ales Dudarev, etc.

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