

Belarus Headlines

Issue XVI

October 3 – 18, 2007



Office for a Democratic
Belarus

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Time Traveller

The Wild Hunt

documentary film
politically motivated disappearances in Belarus



Pavel Sheremet, investigative journalist of the Russian TV channel ORT tries to unravel the mystery of politically motivated disappearances in Belarus.

As a close friend and colleague of the disappeared cameraman Dzmitry Zavadsky, the journalist is determined to discover the truth.

Office for a Democratic Belarus and the Hanse-Office would like to invite you to the documentary film screening "The Wild Hunt"

24th of October
19.00

Hanse-Office
Avenue Palmerston 20
B-1000 Brussel

Free entrance and snacks



Dzmitry Zavadsky with his son



Viktor Hanchar and Anatol Krasowsky disappeared on the same day of 16/09/1999



Yury Zaharanka disappeared 07/05/1999



Dzmitry Zavadsky disappeared 07/07/2000



OFFICE FOR A
DEMOCRATIC BELARUS
Bel 10123



HANSE-OFFICE
Unternehmens-Service und Beratung für den deutsch-belarusischen Handel

Programme of the evening:

- screening of the documentary film
"The Wild Hunt" (2000, 40 min)
subtitles in English

- discussion

Please, confirm your participation
by email: info@democraticbelarus.eu
or by telephone: + 32 2 401 61 41 (42)

directions:



Yury Zakharanka, former Minister of Defence, disappeared on May 7, 1999

Viktor Hanchar, former Head of the Central Election Commission, disappeared on September 16, 1999

Anatol Krasowsky, businessman, disappeared on September 16, 1999 together with Viktor Hanchar

Dzmitry Zavadsky, journalist, disappeared on July 7, 2000

Henadz Karpenka, former Vice-Speaker of the Parliament, died under mysterious circumstances on April 6, 1999

Belarus Represented at the NATO PA Annual Session

On October 5-9, Director of the Office for a Democratic Belarus (Brussels), Olga Stuzhinskaya, participated as observer in the NATO Parliamentary Assembly Annual session in Reykjavik, Iceland.

About 350 legislators from NATO member, partner and observer countries, including delegations from Afghanistan, Algeria, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan and Pakistan, met to discuss major security issues on the Alliance's Agenda.

Policy statements on Afghanistan, the Western Balkans, missile defence, NATO's next round of enlargement, climate change, and the Alliance's relations with Russia, were discussed in the Assembly's 5 committees and presented for adoption by the Assembly in

its plenary meeting.

During the meetings, parliamentarians were also briefed by prominent world experts and policy-makers on Iran and nuclear proliferation; security in South East Europe; Islam in the Caucasus; the relationship between intelligence, terrorism and the preservation of civil liberties; the prospects for a new Strategic Concept for NATO; and India's economic development.

The plenary session was addressed by NATO PA's President, José LELLO, the Speaker of the Icelandic Parliament, Sturla BÖÐVARSSON, and Geir Haarde, Prime Minister of Iceland. The session was marked by the presence of NATO Secretary General Jaap DE HOOP SCHEFFER and

Sali BERISHA, Prime Minister of Albania.

Belarus has not participated in the NATO PA since 1997, when the status of Associate Member (granted in 1991) was suspended as a result of the increasingly undemocratic activities of the Lukashenka regime. On 25 March 2006, the Assembly's Standing Committee adopted a declaration which strongly condemned human rights violations and abuses against opposition candidates and called upon nations "to actively support the democratic forces and promote the development of civil society in Belarus".

10/10/2007

Source: www.nato-pa.int,

Office for a Democratic Belarus

First Meeting of the Council for European Integration (CUI) Took Place in Minsk

On October 10 in Minsk the first meeting of the CEI took place under the chairmanship of Aliaksandr Milinkevich.

The Council for European Integration – is a public coordinative and advisory body, the aim of which is to promote and facilitate integration of Belarus into the common European economic and political space. The final goal is Belarus' membership in the European Union.

Well-known figures from the pro-democratic movement in Belarus at-

tended the event and declared their membership in the Council: Lyudmila Hraznova, Ina Kulei, Tatsiana Procka, Valyantsin Akudovich, Ales Antsipenka, Maxim Zhabankou, Mikhail Zaleski, Viktor Karnyaenka, Ihar Lyalkou, Ales Mikhalevich, Pyotra Martsau, Ivan Nikitchanka, Vyachaslau Paznyak, Ihar Rynkevich, Andrei Fyodarau, Vyachaslau Khadasouski. The discussion focused on the nature of the Council's activities, its future plans and their implementation.

Their support and the wish to join the

initiative expressed also Zhanna Litvina, Alena Makouskaya, Uladzimir Arlou, Lyavon Barshcheuski, Tadeush Gavin, Andrei Dynko, Pavel Marozau, Uladzimir Navasyad, Aleh Novikau, Uladzimir Nyaklyaeu, Paval Sevyarynets, Vital Silitski, Olga Stuzhinskaya, Stanislau Shushkevich.

The list of the Council members remains open for the other Belarusian politicians, scientists, experts, civic activists and cultural figures, who support the European choice for Belarus.

12/10/2007 Source: milinkevich.org

Special Event on the European March in Brussels



On October 14, the Office for a Democratic Belarus organized a special event dedicated to the European March

in Minsk, during which our guests were able to follow the demonstration in Belarus directly via Internet and mobile phone.

Representatives of the EU institutions, Brussels-based non-governmental organizations and the Belarusian community living in Belgium came together in order to show their solidarity with the people of Belarus who came out to the streets of Minsk. The demonstrators once again declared the strive of Belarusians to accept the EU

proposals and to share the values of free and democratic Europe.

Attendance of the event and the great interest shown by the Brussels-based community to the European March underlined the interest of Europe towards Belarus and the hope for future democratic developments.

14/10/2007

Office for a democratic Belarus

Politics and Society

Belarusian Lower House Elects New Head



The Chamber of Representatives on October 2 elected Vadzim Papou as its chairman, Belapan reported. The election followed the resignation of Uladzimir Kanaplyou from the post last month.

Papou, who is 67 years old, already headed the Chamber of Representatives in 2000-04. Before that, he served in various managerial posts in the agricultural sector in Mahilyou Voblast. He was appointed deputy agriculture minister in 1999 and served as agriculture minister for a short stint in 2000.

03/10/2007

Source: Radio Free Europe

Belarus Dashes Veshnyakov's CIS Hopes

Former chairman of the Russian Central Elections Committee Alexander Veshnyakov's candidacy for executive secretary of the Commonwealth of Independent States will not be discussed at the CIS summit in Dushanbe because Belarus remains opposed to his appointment to that post. A consensus is required for the appointment. Moscow's plan to replace current CIS head and former Russian interior minister Vladimir Rushailo with Veshnyakov became known in June but his candidacy was not discussed at the summit in St. Petersburg that month.

Alexander Lukashenko told Russian President Vladimir Putin and Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbaev in St. Petersburg that he was categorically opposed to Veshnyakov's appointment. Efforts to sway the Lukashenko were unsuccessful.

Alexander Lukashenko told Russian President Vladimir Putin and Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbaev in St. Petersburg that he was categorically opposed to Veshnyakov's appointment. Efforts to sway the Lukashenko were unsuccessful.

04/10/2007 Source: Kommersant

Milinkevich Honoured at Forum 2000



Belarusian opposition leader Alexander Milinkevich on Monday received Hanno R. Ellenbogen Citizenship Award that he said he perceived as a recognition of the Belarusian opposition democratic effort.

The prize was presented to Milinkevich by director of the Prague Society for International Cooperation Marc Ellen-

bogen. The award has been named after his mother, a Prague German who spent years with her family in the post-war divided Germany and married an American army soldier.

The award was established with the goal to contribute to overcoming barriers among nations and people.

The previous winners usually gave the money that goes with the award to young people. Milinkevich has decided to give it to his dissident colleague Pavel Sieviarynets, the founder of the opposition Malady Front (Young Front) organisation.

09/10/2007

Source: The Prague Daily Monitor

Iran-Belarus Parliaments

Emphasized on Expansion of Ties

Belarus National Assembly Council chairman said the executing 25 agreements between Iran and Belarus prepares the ground for further cooperation of the two countries.

Gennadz Navitsky in his meeting with Iran's parliament speaker on the sideline of the 117th inter-parliamentary union meeting added that the two countries had many constructive joint investment plans.

09/10/2007

Source: ISNA

Arrests and Trials Ahead of the European March

Police began the crack down on the opposition across Belarus ahead of the European March on October 14 in Minsk.

The human rights center Viasna reported in the morning of October 11 that 18 activists were arrested and charged, but the figure increased in the evening.

In Hrodna, judge Dzmitry Myatsyuk of Leninski district court sentenced **Ihar Bantsar**, a journalist and a member of the Union of Poles to 10 days of administrative arrest. **Anzhalika Borys**, the leader of the unregistered Union of Poles, received a fine of Br460,000 (\$230). The trials took

place behind the closed doors.

In Brest, a local court on October 11 sentenced **Inga Abramava**, a civil activist, to 5 days of arrest. She was charged with cursing. **Yurka Bakura**, arrested together with Abramava, was sentenced by Judge Siarhey Berazyuk to 10 days of arrest.

For full text, please see:

<http://democraticbelarus.eu/node/2544>

Source: ERB

Politics and Society

Lukashenko: Belarus in Talks to Sell Weapons to Venezuela



Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko Friday said that Minsk is negotiating with Caracas the sale of Belarus weapons to Venezuela, but he refused elaborating on likely contracts.

Commenting on press reports claiming that Belarus and Venezuela are initiating a 1 billion USD arms sale agreement, Lukashenko stated, "this issue is absolutely secret".

"Russia is selling weapons to Venezuela, and we will cooperate with that country too, to the extent of our possibilities," Lukashenko added in an interview with the Russian media in Minsk, Efe quoted.

The Belarus ruler acknowledged that Minsk and Caracas

"are engaged in negotiations about military and technical cooperation," but questioned the amount of the reported arms sale agreement.

Lukashenko hailed Venezuela's support to Belarus in "critical times." He reminded that when Belarus needed money, Hugo Chavez' government granted them loans immediately, as well as on oilfield to pump crude oil in Venezuela, amidst a recent energy conflict between Minsk and Moscow.



12/10/2007

Source: El Universal.com

Belarus Opposition Stages Big "European March"



Some 6,000 demonstrators marched through Belarus' capital on Sunday to denounce the policies of President Aliaksandr Lukashenka.

The number was smaller than the 10,000 to 30,000 that organisers had hoped would turn out for the "European March" to try to show the ex-Soviet state wants to move closer to Europe.

Some protesters gathered initially in the city centre in sunny, but chilly, autumn weather. They split into two groups before a small crowd massed in a remote park -- the only site authorised by city authorities.

"We have staged this march for the benefit of a free Belarus, to say that we are moving towards Europe," said Aliaksandr Milinkevich, the opposition leader who challenged Lukashenka in elections last year.

14/10/2007

Source: Reuters

Milinkevich Set to Meet Yushchenko, Saakashvili, Merkel and Poettering

Alexander Milinkevich, the leader of the For Freedom movement, has been invited to attend the European Heads of State and Government Summit, which is taking place on October 18-19 in Lisbon.

European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso and European Parliament President Hans-Gert Poettering are also attending the forum, the aim of which is to discuss the new agreement within the European Union.

The list of non-EU countries invited to the summit includes the presidents of Ukraine and Georgia, and prime ministers of Croatia and Albania.

Alexander Milinkevich is scheduled to meet with the presidents of Ukraine and Georgia, the German chancellor and the president of the European Parliament, reports Belapan.

Milinkevich's press office said that the Belarusian politician will be attending the summit "as a representative of civil society in Belarus and an invited guest".

18/10/2007

Source: ERB

Economics

Belarus Mulls Estonia's Oil

Belarusian Prime Minister Siarhei Sidorsky said Wednesday that his country was considering importing crude oil via Lithuanian



oil terminals Klaipedos Nafta and Butinge, which is owned by PKN Orlen.

Lithuania suggested that Minsk plans to import crude via Klaipedos after Transneft halted supplies to Belarus for several days in January amid a clash over a newly introduced export duty.

"As you know, the pipeline, which goes via Belarus towards Butinge terminal, remains idle. There are certain projects [on crude imports], which could be realized with the use of tankers and sea terminals, including Lithuanian ones," Sidorsky told reporters.

04/10/2007

Source: The Moscow Times

Lithuania is Ready to Invest about \$1bn in Belarusian Economy

Lithuania is ready to invest in the Belarusian economy about \$1 billion. A relevant agreement was made at a meeting between Prime Ministers of Belarus and Lithuania Siarhei Sidorsky and Gediminas Kirkilas respectively on October 3 in Vilnius. According to the Lithuanian Prime Minister, local companies asked him to inform the Belarusian Government about their readiness to invest in Belarus.

The meeting also focused on the trade-economic cooperation between the two countries. In particular, the sides agreed to promote creation of joint Belarusian-

Lithuanian ventures. The Lithuanian party was interested in the energy saving experience of Belarus. Issues on transport cooperation and visa fees for Belarusians in 2008 were high on the agenda as well.

The Prime Ministers also discussed development of power engineering. The Ignalina nuclear power station will be closed in 2009. Belarus and Lithuania have agreed on setting up a working group to elaborate the issue on a depository construction. The sides discussed the construction of the depository near the Belarusian border.

"Belarus prioritizes its ecological security in the issue.

The Prime Ministers considered cooperation in the transport area. Over the eight months of 2007 the amount transport services almost reached the 2006 level. Nearly five million tonnes of the Belarusian cargo were transported through the Lithuanian ports. Lithuania shows great interest in Belarus to use the Klaipeda port to the maximum.

05/10/2007

Source: law.by

Lukashenka Offers Russia Free 5-Year Transit on New Gas Pipeline



Belarusian President Aliaxandr Lukashenka offered to Russia a free five-year transit along a new line of the Yamal-Europe gas pipeline, if this line is to be built.

"The second branch of the gas pipeline should be built immediately, if you are

afraid that it will be expensive we will provide for you a free gas transit via Belarus for the next five years," Lukashenka told at a press conference with regional Russian media.

Lukashenka noted he believes the project of building a gas pipeline on the Baltic Sea bottom and an oil pipeline bypassing Belarus is "inexpedient in financial terms". "One has to deal not only with the sea bottom now, but also with mines and bombs of the World War II, so why to lay down a gas pipeline along the mine field?" Lukashenka pointed out. According to him, the construction of the second branch of the Yamal-Europe gas pipeline is much more profitable.

Speaking on Russia's plans to build an oil pipeline (from Bryansk to the North) bypassing Belarus and therefore refusing to use the Druzhba oil pipeline, Lukashenka said, "We calculated that every tonne of oil will cost 30 dollars more in this case. Which company will choose this route instead of the already built pipe." Meanwhile, he added, "Even if Belarusians lose more than 100 million dollars from oil transit, they will overcome it (we have about 100 billion dollars of GDP), but Russia will lose annually about two billion dollars if pumping oil through the bypass route."

12/10/2007

Source: News Trendaz.com

Economics

Belarus to Opened MTZ Trade and Service Centre in Hungary

The MTZ trade and service centre, first in Europe, with 100%-capital of Belarus opened in Hungary on October 15. The MTZ investments make up more than 1 million euro.

The Belarusian ambassador to Budapest Dmitriy Kriukov told that Belarusian tractors account for the half of the Hungarian market. Annual sales total about 1.000 tractors. The representative office of the Minsk Tractor Works in Hungary

undertook a decision to expand its infrastructure and bought a 60-kilometer plot of Budapest.

The trade and service centre, build on the plot, will sell the products of the Minsk Tractor Works and provide its guarantee and service. The centre includes warehouses for spare components and a ground for displaying Belarusian agricultural hardware. Within the Days of Belarusian Economy in

Hungary the two sides will hold a conference "Belarus and Hungary: a common view upon future trade and economic cooperation", business meetings, presentations of the largest Belarusian companies-exporters.

The two countries will initial a draft agreement between the governments of Belarus and Hungary on economic cooperation.

16/10/2007

Source: BBJ.hu

Russian Gas for Belarus will Cost \$125 per 1,000 Cubic Meters in 2008 - Ambassador

The price Belarus will pay for Russian gas in 2008 will be about \$125 per 1,000 cubic meters, Russian Ambassador to Belarus Alexander Surikov said.

"The price could be nearer \$125 judging from the situation on the market," he said.

The final price for Russian gas in 2008 will be set in December. A price of \$150-\$170 per 1,000 cubic meters would be unrealistic," Surikov said.

17/10/2007

Source: Interfax

EU and Belarus

Statement of B. Klich, Chariman of the Delegation on Belarus (EP)

Chairman of the European Parliament's Delegation on Relations with Belarus, MEP Bogdan Klich, sent a letter to the participants of the European March in Minsk. In his address, Mr Klich expressed Europe's support to the people of Belarus who are striving for a better future, liberty, independence and democracy. He said that Belarus is an integral part of the European culture and history, and its people should no longer tolerate isolation.

The full text can be found here: [Statement Klich European March 14 10 2007.pdf](#)

PACE Rapporteur Meets with Opposition Leaders

Andrea Rigoni, the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE)'s special rapporteur on Belarus, on October 18 met with Belarusian opposition politicians.

Attending the meeting were Anatol Lyabedzka, chairman of the United Civic Party; Vintsuk Vyachorka, chairman of the Belarusian Popular Front; Stanislaw Shushkevich, leader of the Belarusian Social-Democratic Hramada; Viktor Karnyayenka, deputy chairman of the Movement for Freedom; and Valery Ukhnyalyow, deputy head of the Belarusian Party of Communists. The opposition leaders informed Mr. Rigoni about the political situation in the country and pro-democratic forces' preparations for parliamentary elections expected to be held in the fall of 2008.

"We had expected that we would have to explain and argue, but this proved needless," he noted. "Andrea Rigoni showed that he had become rather aware of Belarus' problems, although he had some difficulty in understanding certain issues. For instance, he could not grasp why it is almost impossible to obtain state registration for a pro-democratic party or NGO in Belarus, or why an organization cannot obtain a legal address."

18/10/2007

Source: BelaPAN

Culture

Time Traveller



Uladzimer Arlou discovers the past, present and the future of Belarus in his books

With his thick beard, he looks like a Bronze Age bison hunter, or a Viking wearing a sweater instead of a hauberk. Uladzimer Arlou is one of the most talented contemporary Belarusian authors, with his literary interests ranging from poetry to historical thrillers.

Uladzimer Arlou was born in 1953 in the ancient Belarusian city of Polatsk. The maternity hospital where he was brought to the world was situated some hundred steps away from Sofia cathedral. When the mother of Uladzimer showed her newborn son to his father, who was standing under the windows of the hospital, the white towers of Sophia were probably the first thing the boy saw. "Possibly, this has predetermined my destiny", the author says.

As a child, Uladzimer dreamt of becoming a diver, pathoanatomist, journalist, and spy. Instead, he went to Minsk to study history at the Belarusian State University. Uladzimer says he is thankful to his alma mater

– not for the knowledge of history it gave him, but for the understanding that the objective information about the past is not something one should look for at a Soviet university.

One night, at a student party, Uladzimer's friends played a game – each one had to write down 10 names of prominent historical figures. When they compared their results, they have found a number of Japanese shoguns, but not a single Belarusian person. "It was a moment of truth for me", says Uladzimer Arlou. "For the first time I was painfully confronted with the scale of our historical unconsciousness".

The novels and stories of Uladzimir Karatkevich, which were published when Arlou was still a student, became a revelation for him. "Owing to the books by Karatkevich I began to discover the true history of Belarus, the history any European nation could be proud of". As a Polatsk native by birth, historian by education and author by vocation, Uladzimer Arlou made a pledge to fight the national amnesia, which turns Belarusians into faceless population.



The first works of Uladzimer Arlou appeared in student underground publications "Blue Lantern" and "Milavitsa". The publications resulted into the first acquaintance with "plainclothes literature critics" (all issues of the illegal magazines were confiscated by KGB). Upon graduation, Uladzimer Arlou worked as a teacher, journalist and editor at the publishing house "Mastatskaya Litaratura" in Minsk.

His first official publication, a set of stories "How do You Do, my Dog Rose" was published in 1986. More than 30 books of Arlou were released within the next two decades. Uladzimer Arlou proved to be a skillful promoter of the Belarusian history, with a talent of presenting it in a popular way. His first

bestseller **"Where Our Ancestors Come From"** laid out the basics of the Belarusian history for children and teenagers. However, it immediately ran into problems. The freshly printed copies of the books' first edition got arrested after someone had complained to the Presidential Administration. Allegedly, Uladzimer Arlou stirred up the national hatred between Belarusians and Russians by



showing the Russian Tsar Peter the Great not as a daring reformer, but as a butcher of the Belarusian people during the Great Northern War (1700-1721).

It took the whole year and several highly positive reviews written by well-known historians from the Belarusian Academy of Sciences to get

Culture

Time Traveller

the book onto the shelves of bookstores. "Where Our Ancestors Come From" has been reprinted three times since then, and was even included into the official school program, remaining there until the recent ideological purge.

In 1997 Uladzimir Arlou was fired from "Mastatskaya Litaratura" for "publishing historical and other dubious literature". This hasn't upset him – moreover, he was happy to dedicate more of his time to writing and publishing new "dubious books".

"Kraina Belarus" ("the Country Belarus") became a real gift of Uladzimir Arlou to the nation. Never before the history of Belarus has been presented in such a splendid way. A thick colourful volume is an exciting encyclopedia of the Belarusian past, beginning with the age of dinosaurs and ending with the declaration of independence in 1918.

The Belarusian regime never favoured Arlou, but couldn't help liking his new book. A sales assistant of one of the state-owned bookshops told a story, which happened shortly after "Kraina Belarus" arrived in their store. A couple of people with Presidential Administration IDs in their pockets came storming into the bookshop, asking whether "Kraina Belarus" is already on sale. "It was probably a bad idea to order the book", thought the assistant, but, surprisingly, the officials ordered a dozen copies of the book "for official matters". What these "official matters are", is not a mystery either. President Lukashenka presents

"Kraina Belarus" to the winners of international school and student competitions together with a medal, a diploma, and a collection of his speeches. "I hope that Aliaksandar Lukashenka has left one copy of this beautifully printed book for himself", says Uladzimir Arlou.

"Perhaps, he won't read the text, but I hope he will find a minute-long break from his important state duties and examine its 2000 illustrations. Maybe he would understand that Belarusians have a history of a European nation, which could serve them as a pass into the future".

Arlou is a keen promoter of the "Polatsk mentality". Polatsk, which used to be a capital of the most mighty Belarusian principality on the verge of the 1st and 2nd millennium, was also a cultural centre of the land at that time. "I enjoy the prophecy by Vasil Nyamchyn, Belarusian astrologer of the 16th century, who said that in the 21st century Polatsk would first become the spiritual and then maybe even the administrative capital of the country", says Uladzimir Arlou. That is why, when asked which book he is the most proud of, Uladzimir Arlou names his "Mysteries of the Polatsk History".

Uladzimir Arlou is also famous for his travel essays, which are collected in three books "Ladybug from the 5th Avenue", "Bite off the Head of a Crow" and "The Hannibal's Elephants". "There is



Belarusian as well as Gipsy blood in my veins", says the writer.

"Perhaps, this is the reason why



travels occupy one of the first places in the hierarchy of my values". As a historian and a writer, he travels both in space and in time. "One of the most valuable conclusions, which I drew from this experience, is that the world has merely changed its appearance since the times of Ancient Greeks and Romans. The man, however, hasn't changed a bit since then".

By Ales Kudrytski

For the Office for a Democratic Belarus

Photos by arlou.org, ODB

We on the WEB

www.democraticbelarus.eu