

# Chronicles reveal their secrets

Unique photos of Einstein, Charlie Chaplin, Rabindranath Tagore, Richard Wagner and Belarusian cultural and political figures from 19th-21st century kept in city not far from Minsk

By Viktor Korbuk

The ten storey building in Dzerzhinsk is the tallest in the city, visible from some distance. Not far from Minsk, it is reachable from Koydanovo railway station (the name of the city until the 1930s). It hosts the Belarusian State Archives of Film Shot, Photo Documents and Sound Tapes, boasting priceless shots and recordings of our classical writers and public figures; most of them exist there alone. Thousands of documents reside in iron boxes and cases, having been stored there since 1941.

Seventy years ago, the storage facility was created, open to everyone. On entering the Archives, I decided to first view old photos of the Radziwill family (19th century Belarusian oligarchs) before turning to shots from 1870 of the first railway track being laid in Belarus. Another photo, from 1898, showed an amazing balloon launch at Minsk's Governor's Garden (today's Gorky Park). The originals of the first shots are fragile glass plates.

There are also plenty of photos depicting everyday life, with Belarusian newspapers and news agencies having donated shots. It's a wonderful way to explore the way our forefathers lived. "Glass plates, tapes and, even, modern computer files will be kept here

forever," asserts the Director of the Archives, Victor Balandin. Local pictures depict Yakub Kolas, Vladimir Mulyavin and many other Belarusian cultural figures; some have never been released to the public.

One collection stands out among the others. In 1945, Europe's largest photo collection arrived in Belarus from Germany; it was a 'trophy find' then but is invaluable now, with photos



taken by professionals from around the world. Hundreds of photos of Einstein, Charlie Chaplin, Rabindranath Tagore, Leo Tolstoy and Richard Wagner are now kept in Dzerzhinsk. "We don't know how they appeared in Germany. Most probably, the Nazis took them from an occupied country," explains doctor of historical sciences Sergey Zhumar — the Deputy Director for Scientific

Work at the Belarusian Research Institute of Records Management and Archival Studies. He adds, "We've discovered that these photos originally belonged to the Parisian branch of the Wide World Photos (WWP) Agency, featuring the stamp 'Paris, Rue Reamur, 106' on the reverse. The Agency was supervised by the *New York Times* newspaper; it still exists, as a subdivision of the Associated Press."

Not long ago, staff at the Dzerzhinsk Archives prepared a virtual exhibition to mark the 25th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster, with photos placed online at [www.gomeljust.by](http://www.gomeljust.by) (the website of Gomel Regional Executive Committee's Main Department of Justice). For the first time, photos showing how the Chernobyl catastrophe was dealt with are on show to the public, in addition to shots of those who took part. Only five years ago, these were declassified. The disaster affected millions of people, with the Gomel Region suffering most of all. Of course, the tragedy is now in the past but it remains a significant part of our history. Dzerzhinsk's Archives of Film Shot, Photo Documents and Sound Tapes hold the key to unlocking that past.



Archive materials reveal past truths

## From strategic point of view

**Philips Healthcare takes part in International Healthcare of Belarus-2011 Exhibition, while Konstantin Sysoyev, Regional Director, tells us that the company is keen to work on the Belarusian market**

According to Mr. Sysoyev, participation in the fair was the first step in Philips entering the Be-

larusian market. The company has presented its latest innovation solutions and high-tech medical developments. He adds that Philips can aid the Belarusian state in fulfilling healthcare provision: covering oncology, cardiology and the health of mothers and children. He believes that these three areas are currently a top priority.

"The Belarusian market is constantly expand-

ing, so is of great interest to large companies. Moreover, the state's healthcare budget allows the country to actively co-operate with such companies," underlines Mr. Sysoyev. He notes that Philips plans to promote technologies in various areas of healthcare while implementing long-term initiatives on the basis of international experience and expertise.

## Bridge revived as it once stood

By Felix Mamontov

**Border crossing point between Brest and Polish Terespol for pedestrians and cyclists may soon appear**

A bridge is to be reconstructed over the River Bug, where it once existed, uniting Brest Fortress' Terespol Gates with Hospital Island. A Brest delegation, headed by the Chairman of Brest's City Executive Committee, Alexander Palyshenkov, recently met Polish partners in Terespol to discuss the details.

The bridge is to follow its original appearance from the mid-19th century, which was a copy of the chain link bridge from the Summer Garden in St. Petersburg. It will allow crossing of the River Bug from Brest Fortress, reaching Hospital Island. A further kilometre walk will bring visitors to the Belarusian-Polish border.

Polish and Belarusian partners hope that the EU will help fund the project as part of targeted financing of trans-boundary collaboration.

## Tourism focuses on export of services

By Andrey Avreev

**About \$500,000 to be allocated to promote tourism in Belarus this year**

The State Tourism Promotion Programme for 2011-2015, adopted by the Council of Ministers, also envisions the drastic reduction of budget financing (down to 18 percent of the total); the remaining sum is to come from non-budgetary sources. Additionally, the new programme excludes tourist and excursion services for which fees are paid (since this focused primarily on imports of tourist services). Instead, the updated law 'On Tourism', adopted in October 2010, now uses the in-

dicators of export and import of tourist services to assess the success of Belarusian tourism.

The new programme aims to raise the export of tourist services 3.5-fold — to \$510m — by 2015. The document envisages the construction and renovation of over 200 tourist facilities, including tourist complexes, hunting lodges and cultural sites. Special attention is being given to the hotel branch, especially in Minsk, which is to host the 2014 Ice Hockey World Championship. In all, 28 sites have been allotted for investors to build hotel complexes, with 14 already gaining concrete projects. More sites may be allocated for hotel construction as 2014 approaches.



Nesvizh among most picturesque towns in the country

In addition, other state programmes are partially dedicated to the promotion of the tourist industry in Belarus; among them are the State Programme for Social and Economic Development and Complex Use of Natural Resour-

ces of Pripyat Polesie for 2010-2015 and the State Programme to Develop the Recreational Zone of the Lake Naroch Region for 2011-2015. Over 1,000 tourist facilities are to be constructed and renovated in Belarus by 2015.