

Geography won't hamper partnership

By Dmitry Palchevsky

Belarusian and Korean scientists expand joint search

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Korea to Belarus, H.E. Mr. Kang Weon Sik, recently attended the ceremonial opening of the Days of Korean Science in Belarus. He stressed that co-operation between our countries in the field of science and technology is mutually beneficial, adding that, by uniting our intellectual and investment potential, impressive progress could be achieved.

At the core of the Days of Korean Science in Belarus was the solemn launch of the Belarusian-Korean Centre for Educational and Scientific Co-operation. A Belarusian-Korean scientific-technological seminar was held, studying three dozen new projects in the field of nano- and biotechnologies, new materials, optics and informatics. After an expert assessment, the most promising proposals are to be chosen, guiding future programmes of joint research and sci-tech development.

Over the past two years, Belarusian scientific-research institutions and universities have conducted 14 joint projects with Korean organisations, covering the areas of energy, medicine, metallurgy, laser technologies, pharmacology, agro-technologies and software development. In 2010, almost \$500,000 of foreign currency was accumulated by Belarusian universities and scientific organisations from contracts concluded with Korean partners (double 2009 figures).

Not recorded on lists yet

Archivists specify number of villages burnt by Nazis from 1941-1944

By Viktor Korbut

It's commonly heard that, during the Great Patriotic War, fascists destroyed 628 Belarusian villages and their residents; 186 have never been restored. These are drastic figures but, in fact, embrace only those settlements covered by the Khatyn Memorial Complex. Nobody really knows for sure how many Belarusian villages and residents were burnt during the war years.

In the 1980s, tragic statistics were released, stating that 9,200 villages were burnt, including 5,295 with all their villagers. However, it's now clear that these figures need clarification. "The scale of the catastrophe is even greater," stresses Vyacheslav Selemenev, chief archivist at the National Archives of Belarus. Not long ago, he presented a collection of compiled documents: *Tragedy of Belarusian Villages: 1941-1944*. The book is a joint work with Natalia Kirillova — a co-ordinator of the international *Enhancement of the Status of Rescued Residents of Burnt Belarusian Villages* project. The book contains many materials previously unreleased, which alter our view of the scale of genocide during the war (the 70th anniversary of its beginning was marked by Belarus on June 22nd).

While celebrating the Independence Day of July 3rd (when Minsk was liberated from the Nazis in 1944), it's vital to recall that Belarus, as no other European state, experienced the greatest losses during WWII. It's hard to imagine but, until 1941, the population stood at 10m (today, it is slightly over 9m); during the war years, every third citi-



Khatyn Memorial Complex embodies memory of all Belarusian villages burnt by fascists

zen died. However, until now, we haven't known the exact figure. Mr. Selemenev tells us how the names of all victims could be discovered.

Mr. Selemenev, it seems everything has been written about the fascists' crimes during Soviet times. Are there any blank spots left?

As we've discovered, there are many. Until now, Belarus has lacked any special scientific research on the theme of burnt villages. We have novels based on source materials — such as Ales Adamovich's *'I'm From a Fiery Village'*, and stories by Yanka Bryl and Vladimir Kolesnik, as well as materials from the *'Memory'* books, but these tend to be recollections of eyewitnesses. No scientific study of the problem has ever been made.

Since 2006, there have

been international conferences covering the topic of *'German Repression and Destruction of Villages During WWII'* — organised at the initiative of Germany's Topical Forum Foundation. Next May, Minsk is to host its fourth conference. Interestingly, Belarus — where the greatest number of villages was burnt — was only invited to the third forum. Our tragedy is almost unknown worldwide.

In Soviet times, a powerful propaganda system operated. Did it fail to spread the truth about the tragedy of Belarusian villages to the global community?

Certain researches tackled the problem of genocide but dealt with *'general issues'*. In the 1960s, a collection of documents entitled *'Crimes of German-Fascist Invaders in Belarus'* was published twice but

contained little information about the burnt villages. The recently released book includes 212 documents, with most published for the first time. *'The Tragedy of Belarusian Villages'* includes reports, acts, references, information and special applications by local party members, state officers and partisan groups about the crimes of the Nazis on the occupied territory. It also includes eye-witness accounts from those who escaped the burnt villages and extracts from diaries. It features reports by various Wehrmacht divisions and organisations and by the police and civil occupation administration about their counterinsurgency operations against the partisans and peaceful citizens.

Where did you find these papers?

Most were in the National

Archives, while some were found in regional archives and in the State Archives of Russia. They are understudied. Moreover, the National Academy of Sciences had data on the burnt villages of which we knew nothing before. *'The Nazi Policy of Genocide and the Burnt Land of Belarus'*, released in 1984, numbers the burnt villages (using data compiled by special district commissions) but, comparing this data with archive documents, we noticed inconsistencies. In recent years, we've been preparing an e-base of burnt villages, which is to contain the most topical information. The next generation of researchers will be able to use it in their studies. We say *'nobody is forgotten'* so we must restore the names of all those who suffered during the occupation.

Pilots view planes above all

Aviation Academy could appear in Belarus

The establishment of a Belarusian State Aviation Academy has recently been discussed in Minsk, during a sitting of the Co-ordination Council of the Interstate Aviation Committee (training aviation specialists). The Academy could be set up at Minsk's State Higher Aviation College, as its Head, Alexander Laptsevich, explains. This is the third attempt to establish such an institution in Belarus, with projects in 2005 and 2007 put aside.

"This problem badly needs a solution. Firstly, it's an issue of prestige: aviation academies operate in all other states who are members of the Convention on International Civil Aviation. Secondly, since 2006, we've



Work of a pilot presupposes great professionalism

been conducting separate enrolment of students for specialities in higher and secondary special education (although, in line with the Belarusian Education Code, we can only provide second-

ary special education). Finally, it would be quite profitable from a financial point of view to have the Academy (rather than using our old model of training aviation specialists). We won't lose

our Military Department yet will also be able to train dispatchers and enrol foreign students. The College has all the prerequisites to become an Academy," says Mr. Laptsevich.

Unique cadastre

By Tatiana Chervyakova

Belarusian scientists compile Republic's flora cadastre for the first time

"For the first time in the Republic, qualitative and quantitative data on rare, endangered, economically valuable and harmful plants has been summarised, also covering plant communities and valuable botanical planting," explains the Chief of the Flora Cadastre Sector at the Belarusian National Academy of Sciences' Experimental Botany Institute, Oleg Maslovsky. The cadastre includes over 3,000 plants and is unique in the CIS and Eastern Europe for its quality of flora registration and volume of available information.

The Institute has been conducting research for al-

most nine years, studying all 118 districts of Belarus. As a result, the cadastre occupies over 120,000 typewritten pages of information, uniting 6,856 populations of 288 varieties (listed in Belarus' Red Book). The biological, medicinal and food relevance of plants has been calculated for the first time, with 950,000 plants listed in total. The resource will be kept updated, aiding import substitution and Belarus' export potential.

"Passports for 1,773 plant populations have also been prepared, aiding their legal protection," explains Mr. Maslovsky. Measures to protect plants have been strengthened, while their main habitats have been located, helping define the ecological network of the county for the future.