

# Let's bow to those great years!

(Continued from page 1)

The war passed like a murderous hurricane through the territory of Belarus, taking away a third of our residents. The Belarusian nation has earned its right to live as it desires.

Recently, we have seen many examples of ignorance of international law and rude interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states in the Middle East and Africa, as well as in other 'hot spots'. Threats and intimidation are also addressed to our country. Accordingly, it's of the greatest importance that we remain firm and courageous.

We firmly announce the inadmissibility of rewriting WWII history and of violating the principles of the Organisation of United Nations. We advocate that provision be made for each nation's right to free choice in its path of development — rather than the imposition

of 'new democratic order' (as seen seven decades ago).

Being at the centre of Europe, our state pursues a multi-vector foreign policy, open to dialogue with both West and East. However, don't misinterpret our good will as weakness, believing you can address Belarus with blackmail and threats.

Some things cannot be sacrificed for the sake of national prosperity: independence, dignity and stability. Respect for these achievements of the Great Victory unites us, making us a single, strong nation.

Belarus is developing and strengthening its armed forces, while interacting with partners on collective security. Jointly with brotherly Russia, we are protecting the borders of our Fatherland.

We understand that the character of war has changed and continues to do so. Today's aggressors often try to 'decompose' a country

from inside, placing it in a subordinate position via economic sanctions and the political activity of local 'fifth columns'. They disseminate chaos and revolution via IT and social networks. The struggle for people's consciousness is of particular note.

Under such modern conditions, the protection of the Fatherland must be conducted nationwide, relying on patriotism and the readiness of each resident to defend the interests of their Homeland through all spheres. The invaluable experience of that generation of winners is a source of spiritual and moral power for the Belarusian nation.

## Dear veterans!

Through your lives and heroic deeds, you've given us an example of civil dignity and selfless service to the Fatherland. We'll guard the peace you won for us.

Contemporary Belarus continues to pay homage to the events of those years and the fates of front line soldiers. Today, descendants of those who gained military fame parade in festive columns alongside our hero-liberators. I have no doubt that they and their children will never allow anyone to ignore the achievements of the victorious spring of 1945.

I'd also like to address our foreign veterans who helped liberate our country. Belarus preserves a grateful memory of you. Victory Day is our common celebration!

Dear veterans, I wish you strong health, good spirits and long years of life.

I wish all our fellow countrymen and guests happiness, prosperity and all possible successes, for the benefit of our peaceful, free and wonderful Belarus.

**Congratulations on Victory Day!**

## Relay race of generations

By Olga Bebenina

### Mount of Glory becomes centre of celebrations in Minsk Region

Events featuring the leadership of the Minsk Region have been organised at two other large memorial complexes in the region: at Khatyn and at Stalin's Line Historical and Cultural Complex.

Veterans joined representatives of labour collectives and young people at the Mount of Glory on Victory Day. Addressing everyone present, the Chairman of the Minsk Regional Executive Committee, Boris Batura, noted the great contribution of the Minsk Region in claiming the Great Victory, as well as the heroism and courage of Minsk Region dwellers.

"It's impossible to overestimate the contribution of Minsk Region residents regarding our common victory. They fought selflessly against the hateful enemy while experiencing all the troubles and hardships of war," added Mr. Batura. "The current generation continues the wonderful traditions of the past with dignity and workers in the region aim to preserve socio-economic growth. We look to the future with confidence and are doing our best to preserve peace and happiness on Earth."

All districts in the Minsk Region have been celebrating the 67th anniversary of the victory of the Soviet nation during the Great Patriotic War. Commemorative services have been organised, with wreaths and flowers laid at monuments to the memory of those soldier-liberators.

## Sacred deed

By Lyudmila Overkina

### Remains of eight Red Army soldiers re-buried in Vitebsk District

An officer and seven ordinary soldiers killed near Vitebsk in winter 1944 have now found eternal rest, being ceremonially re-buried near the village of Luchinovka, in the Vitebsk District's Voronovo Rural Council.

"Severe fighting took place in this area," explains Anatoly Burdo, who heads Vitebsk's Poisk (Search) military-patriotic club. "We're working to discover the name of each missing person in the war, burying them with honours."

So far, the club has detected over 130 people who were buried anonymously near Luchinovka, between December 1943 and January 1944. In commemoration, the Polotsk District lit lamps simultaneously on May 9th at each military grave, honouring those soldiers who gave their lives for victory. "In doing so, we were uniting the residents of the district. It covers a large territory, so lacks a single centre for meeting on Victory Day," notes the Head of the Ideology Work Department at the Polotsk District Executive Committee, Olga Voroshkevich.

"There are 111 obelisks and memorial plaques in the district, with over 8,500 people buried. Yesterday, we honoured the memory of each one."

# Great honour to save victory

Our veterans are great, with eyes sparkling anew on Victory Day. Their venerable age is no obstacle to their gathering together to jointly celebrate this wonderful holiday.

By Kirill Dovlatov

On May 9th, Minsk traditionally organises a solemn parade from Oktyabrskaya Square to Pobedy Square, where wreaths and flowers are laid at the monument. Veterans either parade on foot or travel in open UAZ cars, each greeting one another by raising their hands in military salute. They share news on common acquaintances and a shadow appears across their faces on learning of those unable to attend. However, they immediately light up with delight when children approach to offer flowers and congratulations. What better reward for victory can there be than the new life of fresh generations? For the sake of this new life, they were ready to part with their own in the 1940s. We bow to them for their deeds...

The President joined the veterans on Victory Day, in the traditional festive parade, as always. He also greeted foreign ambassadors gathered at the Victory Monument, showing that Belarus is ready to engage in honest dialogue with any state, proceeding from principles of mutual respect and equal rights. Chatting with veterans, the President expressed his gratitude, noting, "People's memory will remain alive as long as you live. Young people need you — so that they can see and understand the deeds you performed." There was a sense that, if Mr. Lukashenko requested the former soldiers to enter the field of battle, they would immediately be ready to go. After the parade, the President spoke to journalists. Below are some extracts from his speech.



Great Patriotic War veterans have much to tell youngsters

## Historical memories

Have we succeeded in defending the right to preserve this memory, of this day? I spoke about it perhaps 15 years ago — when talking about such matters was unacceptable: responsible executives felt shy in speaking about this then. We were the first within the post-Soviet space to sound the alarm that attempts were being made to rewrite history. Accusing the former leaders of the Soviet Union was nothing but an attack on our victory. We put everything straight. Yes, there were many mistakes made in the past. Not everything went smoothly in our country but such things were to be expected at the time. Some major mistakes happened but nobody has the right to take this victory from us.

We won. Over 30m Soviet people gave their lives for this victory, while over 3m of our countrymen died, impacting on all post-war history. We saved mankind from the 'brown plaque', protecting Great Britain and

the United States of America, which seemed to be far away from this theatre of military action. We saved the German nation from Nazism, for which ordinary Germans are grateful. Europeans are grateful to us for liberating Europe.

However, politicians do not remain idle. After the USSR's collapse, there was an attack on our victory and, thank God, we defended it. The Russian President is, for the first time it seems to me, openly speaking of Nazism. He notes that the Soviet people were victorious over Nazism and that we are the inheritors of this Great Victory. Therefore, today, we can say with confidence that we have defended the victory given to us by our past generations. This is our victory.

## Burning aspect

There would have been no victory but for mass patriotism. We won thanks to the spirit of our Soviet people. They had not traditional weapons at the beginning of the war with

which to defend the country. Soviets defended our land with their own blood. Would this be possible without patriotism? Patriotism is not just a weapon in our hands; it is found in the brains of people. This is our economic victory, preserving our social foundations and traditions. Patriotism is a multifaceted concept. In my opinion — and I call upon all Belarusians for this — patriotism lies at the heart of all our successes. Without patriotism, there is no success. We must love our homeland.

Look at the Americans, whose patriotism is even stronger than that of the Soviet Union. They are permeated with patriotism, engaged in wars of conquest in the belief of being right. Why shouldn't we be patriots now? We must be even greater patriots, having such a history and traditions. Patriotism is essential. If you are a patriot, all else will follow. If you love your homeland and work for its good, this will generate economic successes, good salaries, development and well-being.