

Truth born through debate

7th International *Youth for Peace* Law Competition hosted by Belarusian Ratomka

By Yekaterina Medvedskaya

The forum is unrivalled within the CIS and Eastern Europe, gaining in popularity every year. Initiated by the Minsk International Institute of Labour and Social Relations, it began with a few teams from neighbouring states but now gathers students from 15 countries — including those from Nepal, Cuba, Poland, China and, even, Kenya.

Tomorrow's diplomats, lawyers, judges, attorneys, ministers and presidents debated how best to promote world peace. The final of the Olympiad is traditionally organised in non-standard form, with role-playing games in which young people pretend to be employees of law companies protecting the interests of various sides of a debate, playing experienced lawyers and, even, presidential advisers. Their decisions influence the fate of nations, as they settle military conflicts, end economic and information blockades and counteract



This year, the competition near Minsk has brought together strongest teams from world's leading universities

terrorist threats. Undoubtedly, the challenges of promoting peace became evident.

The jury, comprising highly professional experts

in international law from New Zealand, Argentina, Norway, Armenia, Belgium and Belarus, had a difficult decision in choosing the winners. "There were

no weak teams," asserted Vladimir Vardanyan, who heads the International Treaty Department and is a lawyer with the Legal Advisory Service of the Consti-

tutional Court of Armenia.

The Netherlands won the event this year (the University of Leiden and the University of Amsterdam) beating the Russian

team by a small margin. Meanwhile, Alexandra Ivlieva, a student at the Moscow State University, was recognised as the best speaker, alongside Vasily Pavlov, from Minsk's MIT-SO, and Reika Khollosh, on the winning team. All entrants were presented with books.

Open lectures were also held on international law, prepared by foreign and Belarusian experts. The *Youth for Peace* Law Competition was held exclusively in English for the second year, to ensure that all those attending were able to understand.

The event is ranked among the top three European international law contests. According to the First Pro-rector of MIT-SO International University, Prof. Andrey Kozik, who organises the contest, every participant had the chance to chat with experienced lawyers and to make friends with their peers from other countries, while acquiring new knowledge in practice.

Book always returns to its motherland

Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz's *Historical Journeys*, originally published in St. Petersburg in 1859, is first original exhibit at Niemcewicz's Estate

"I found the book online, through a collector; Brest District Executive Committee helped to purchase the edition," explained the Director of the Museum, Sergey Semenyuk, speaking to those at the first *Meeting the Niemcewicz's* scientific and practical conference. The event was hosted at the restored Niemcewicz palace, in the village of Skoki (Brest District). Its hall saw a truce signed in December 1917 to end the WWI and the preparation of the Treaty of

Brest-Litovsk.

"Each year, there will be three events: in May — a scientific conference; in December, events to mark the signing of the armistice; and, in February, Ursyn evenings, devoted to the birthday of Julian," Mr. Semenyuk promises.

Ten years ago, in May 2002, the descendants of the Niemcewicz — from Poland, France and Canada — attended a conference at Brest Regional Library and were taken to Skoki, to see the ruined palace. It has now been utterly restored. This year, it's planned to complete the restoration of two halls and to open a Museum of Pribuzhie there, as well as an armoury — all paid for from regional budgetary funds.

Attempt ends in smooth landing

By Olga Levadova

Brest border guards arrest eight Indian citizens trying to illegally cross Belarusian-Polish border

The foreigners tried to cross the border by air, with the help of climbing equipment, placing a cable between trees (in order not to leave footprints). They then planned to cross the Za-

padny Bug River in rubber boots. However, the plan has failed and the illegal immigrants have been arrested. None were carrying identification documents.

The State Border Committee believes the Indians have been working with accomplices in Belarus and Poland, as the plan is so elaborate. They are now looking for possible suspects.

Time creates style

By Olga Bebenina

Borisov launches first business postal station in Minsk Region

Many of us have been in the situation of waiting in a postal queue behind a courier with a large bag of letters. It's always frustrating having to wait, and can seem unfair to 'ordinary' customers. However, to tackle such inconvenience, the Belarusian Post Of-

fice (Belpochta) is launching a network of special stations to serve large and small enterprises; the first are already operational in Minsk and in regional centres.

Not long ago, a branch solemnly opened in the Minsk Region's Borisov. As the Director of Belpochta's Minsk branch, Zhanna Shebeko, notes, this is just the beginning. "We'll soon open special post offices in Zhodi-



no and Molodechno and, by the end of the year, in Slutsk and Soligorsk. We also plan to open a post office to serve

major clients from the Minsk District — where a great number of enterprises of all sizes operate," she explains.

Bold idea receives support

New mini-hotel for travellers opens in Minsk



Traveller Hostel wins Grodno Invest Weekend

By Irina Byshevtseva

Student Ksenia Kurus has the idea of opening a hostel for 36 people in the city, charging \$15 a night. Besides a bed,

guests can use the Internet, have access to tea and coffee, and receive a towel and bed linen.

"I've travelled quite a lot worldwide — across Europe

and Asia, always staying in hostels," explains the young entrepreneur, sharing her inspiration. "I have a clear idea of what such places should offer, so decided to open some-

thing similar in Minsk. It's taken a lot of work to calculate a business plan but the trickiest aspect was finding an investor. When I lost hope, I decided to join the *Invest Weekend* project in Grodno, seeing it as my last chance to show my plans. My idea was accepted, with a private investor agreeing to put up \$50,000 to open the hostel."

Ksenia thinks that Europeans and travellers from Moscow and St. Petersburg will be the most frequent guests and doesn't see the remote location from the centre as a problem — since many hostels in Europe are on the outskirts (where prices are cheaper). Availability and quality of service are vital, alongside an atmosphere of youthful energy.