

‘I’m supporting us having more private property...’

Alexander Lukashenko speaks to students of Belarusian State Economic University’s International Economic Relations Department and answers questions on a variety of topics

By Denis Krylov

The topic of conversation with tomorrow’s international economists was, appropriately, ‘Belarus under conditions of globalisation, our points of growth and prospects.’ The President proposed those present ponder the topic in relation to their future profession. He set forth the foundations of the Belarusian model of economic development, saying, “It uses a combination of market economics, state regulation and strong social policy.”

Until recently, such words might have inspired hot debate but the fashion for absolute market liberalism (to which youngsters are susceptible) is less strong than it was. Mr. Lukashenko noted that the global financial crisis obliged even those countries most known for their open markets to apply elements of state regulation. Students with some knowledge of the subject agreed.

Clearly, economies are delicate, operating best under a steady, central path. Neither absolute control nor uncontrollable freedom (which can resemble anarchy) is effective. Rather, a sensible and well-balanced approach is needed. The future may be bright if those shaping it appreciate the



President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko addresses audience on their future professions

justice of this assertion.

The Belarusian President laid out the characteristics of the Belarusian economy, and the advantages and disadvantages of its extreme openness, as well as its foreign economic interests. He explained its work in relation to the WTO, the Customs Union and the Single Economic Space, as well as its strategies of modernisation, innovation and promotion of intellectual assets. He emphasised the importance of commitment, speaking simply and sometimes figuratively, saying, “We take for granted out highly qualified special-

ists and diligent workers but labour efficiency at our enterprises is much lower than that seen at advanced foreign companies and our consumption of materials and energy is much higher.”

He stressed that laziness is our enemy and that idlers should be treated severely: a comment with which no one disagreed. The President told the students that he believes they can support the economy, since their skills are particularly useful. He hopes they will help seek out new markets, while encouraging the inflow of direct foreign investments. He asserted that work in

any field is precious, with loyalty to the country being the vital factor. He noted sincerely, “Patriotism is not only a moral truth; it’s an economic reality. Ideals and loyalty to the Fatherland are as important as actions and simple hard work. We’re judged by our actions. True patriots help grow the national wealth of Belarus, taking responsibility for their share of the nation’s well-being.”

In their questions to the President, the students focused on a variety of topics — from professional to forecasts for the 2014 IIHF World Championship, in-

cluding the state’s relations with private business. State policy was presented unambiguously: businesses can form a true partnership in which mutual obligations and social responsibilities are met. The Belarusian leader treats private property with respect, stressing, “I’ve always emphasised that I’m not against private property. I’m happy to see more private property where it helps people to realise their potential and creates a greater number of wealthy people in the country who bring benefit to themselves and the state.” Of course, it can be the case that proper-

ty is acquired in a different fashion, through underhand dealing. Others have worked hard from scratch to build their own businesses.

Politics also arose in the conversation, which lasted over three hours. Later, the students were able to chat among themselves and with journalists, hardly able to conceal their satisfaction. The President seemed to be pleased, finally recollecting his own days as a lecturer. Evidently, it was a pleasant memory, as was his sincere interest in the youngsters’ attitude towards their future and the future of their country.

Achieving goals is a good habit

Gomel Engineering Institute’s Ksenia Shingirei wins ‘Student of the Year’ contest

The eight smartest, most talented and active young boys and girls — tomorrow’s doctors and pharmacists, engineers and psychologists countrywide — took part in the final of the contest, hosted by the BSU Lyceum. All boast an average of 8 points, while a representative of the BSUIR has 10 points.

Ksenia Shingirei, from Gomel’s Engineering Institute of the Ministry for Emergency Situations, was the overall winner, which came as no surprise to her friends. Despite her young years, she has seven years’ experience as a volunteer, working with children with special needs. Partnered by her friend Maxim, who has Down’s syndrome, she danced for the contest; Maxim was her constant shadow.

“The competition was very strong so I worried about how the audience and jury would view our dance,” admits lucky



Ksenia Shingirei — ‘Student of the Year’

Ksenia. She tells us that she likes to set goals — as encouraged by teachers at the Emergency Ministry Institute — and believes this brought her to victory. Her choice of future profession is well thought out. She explains, “I’ve always been an unusual child, seeking out events and intrigue...”

Preparation for the contest has been time consuming, al-

though her ‘Student of the Year’ title comes with a wonderful prize: a netbook and a promise by the Education Minister, Sergey Maskevich, that she has access to his office at any time. She now intends to focus fully on her studies.

Of course, all the finalists were worthy of a medal. Each participant’s stand contained not only their portfolios but

certificates, cups and letters of gratitude. In the oratory event, the youngsters were required to charm everyone on the usefulness of reading. Other rounds included sporting achievements and creative performances.

Olga Maslak, from Vitebsk’s State Medical University, has written a short reference book to help first year students. She also enjoys mountain climbing, aerobics and felt making. “I just do whatever I enjoy,” she notes modestly.

In an Internet vote for ‘Student of the Year-2012 ONLINE’, the youngsters created their own humorous videos, acting as directors, script writers and artists. Hosted by YouTube, the clip with the most votes was that of BSUIR student Yulia Reznichenko. Her fellow students say she is like Figaro: able to be in three places simultaneously...

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