

Khatyn's bells sound in sorrow

70 years ago, German fascists burnt the village of Khatyn in the Logoisk District, together with 149 villagers, including the elderly, women and children. Another 629 Belarusian villages shared the same fate, with Khatyn destined to represent them all, becoming chosen for the state memorial site.

On May 22nd 1943, the Fascists surrounded the village and rounded up all the residents of Khatyn, locking them inside the barn. The Nazis then placed straw around the perimeter, poured on gasoline and set light to the building, which contained the elderly, women and children, as well as menfolk. Any who managed to escape the flames were shot — using rifles and machine guns. In all, 149 people were killed, including 75 children under the age of 16. Khatyn was then looted and razed to the ground. Only two children survived: Victor Zhelobkovich, aged 7, and Anton Baranovsky, 12, who were found and treated by citizens from neighbouring villages.

The only adult to survive witnessing the Khatyn tragedy was blacksmith Iosif Kaminsky, 56. He was wounded and burnt but recovered consciousness late at night, when the Nazis had left the village. His son, mortally wounded, died in his father's arms, as is depicted in Khatyn's only sculpture: The Unconquered Man.

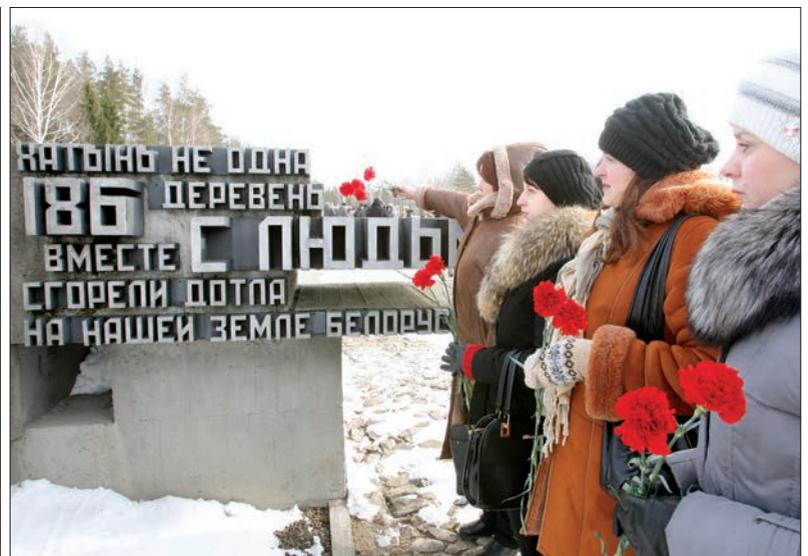
At a recent memorial ceremony, the eternal flame's pedestal became scarlet with so many mourning wreaths and carnations; that of the President was placed at the centre. Administration Head Andrei Kobyakov read an address from Mr. Lukashenko and later told reporters, "The tragedy of Khatyn is a lesson for all mankind. Monuments such as this, located where

the Nazis burnt villages, are necessary not only in memory of victims but to remind us that such atrocities should never again occur. The country's leadership is doing all it can to ensure that independence is not stolen from us. There are attempts to erode from our memory the great victory and the tremendous losses endured."

A minute of silence was accompanied by the sound of a metronome and gun volleys from the honour guard. The bells sounded, as if to wake the dead. Paying tribute to the fallen, the First Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration, Alexander Radkov, bowed his head, joined by the Chairman of the Minsk Region Executive Committee, Boris Batura, alongside clergy, veterans, war survivors and those who lived through their own villages' destruction; 70 years have passed but those terrible war memories remain painful.

"In the third year of the war, I was very small. My knowledge of the burning of our village of Alexandrovka, in the Klichev District, is mostly from the mother's stories. We were gathered from our homes many times but then released; however, one day, they didn't let us go. My mother and I hid in the forest," recalls Inna Mikhno, her voice trembling.

Yekaterina Sazonko, a tenth grade student of Kamen high school, read some poignant poems about Khatyn, rousing tears not



On March 22nd, people gathered at Khatyn Memorial Complex to honour memory of dead

only from the veterans. "Many people write poems about war but I'll write a poem about peace. Let peace reign in every country, in every

home and in every apartment. Let's preserve our peace here and now, so that war will not touch us." She often visits the memorial complex,

holding Khatyn dear. The memory of that burnt village, and all others, is sacred to every Belarusian. Those memories will never die.

Warm words for good actions

By Maria Astakhova

Japanese grateful to Belarus for help in tackling consequences of disaster at Fukushima-1 nuclear power station

Belarusian-Japanese co-operation and developing relations have been discussed at a meeting between the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to Japan, H.E. Mr. Sergey Rakhmanov, and deputies from

the lower chamber of the Japanese Government, who are members of the Association of Friendship and Parliamentary Ties with the Republic of Belarus.

"During the meeting, the Japanese expressed gratitude for the

assistance provided in tackling the consequences of the catastrophe at the Fukushima-1 nuclear power station and confirmed their interest in promoting bilateral collaboration," stresses the Belarusian Foreign Ministry.

Unique icon on display to public

18th century bilateral processional icon presented at National History Museum of Belarus in Minsk

The Feretron is a processional icon in Catholic and Uniata churches, serving a liturgical function and an artistic role. Unlike Orthodox images, it is used not only during procession but is placed on the altar at other times.

Belarus possesses few such sacred exhibits within its History Museum and this wonderful icon is on show for the first time in 42 years. Curator Galina Flikop tells us, "We are not only displaying a restored item but returning it to circulation as a regular exhibit, rather than leaving it in the archives."

The icon combines decorative-and-applied and pictorial art styles, using oil paint on canvas, either side of a wooden cartouche: Christ is depicted on one side, while the other shows an image of the Ruzhantsova Mother of God, with Saints Dominic and Rose of Lima on her left and right, wearing the black and white clothes of the Dominican Order.

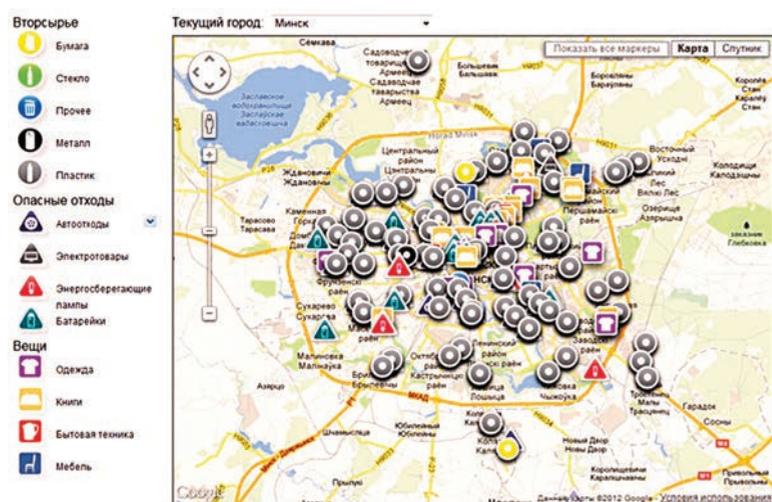
Interactive 'cheat sheet' required

By Anna Yerokhova

New mobile application shows where to dispose of recyclable materials and dangerous waste

The Centre for Environmental Solutions launched Belarus' mobile version of the Green Map project a few months ago, being one of the first with an eco-focus. Programmer Sergey Sadovnikov's application for phones using an Android operating system is able to locate the nearest place for recycling, as well as for disposal of dangerous waste and unwanted items.

"We expect this mobile service to expand the audience of Green Map and attract attention towards



Green Map for mobile devices

the issue of waste and chemical safety," notes the director of the

Centre for Environmental Solutions, Yevgeny Lobanov.

The new application has roused great interest among Internet users. Waste recycling and disposal sites in Polotsk, Novopolotsk and Slonim have already joined Minsk and Grodno, with Brest and Gomel next to take part.

"I'm glad that not only regional centres have joined our initiative. People in small towns are aware of the importance of the waste problem and we invite everyone to join this 'green' movement. Place your city on the interactive map," emphasises Mr. Lobanov.

Download the mobile application free of charge from green-map.by.