

Memories will never die

During WWII, Minsk Ghetto was considered to be one of the largest in Europe. Opening in the summer of 1941, its residents were held there until October 1943. During this period of time, the black muzzle of Nazi hatred absorbed almost 100,000 Jews, including tens of thousands deported from Austria, Poland and other European states. Minsk recently held a ceremony to mark the 70th anniversary of those terrible times: Memorial Days of Minsk Ghetto.



Meeting marks 70th anniversary of destruction of Minsk Ghetto

By Galina Ulitenok

Time cannot heal every wound, as the audience was reminded at a concert hosted by the Belarusian State Philharmonic Society, devoted to the prisoners of Minsk Ghetto. Some cried, even now unable to recollect those sufferings without intolerable pain. Others were learning about the torture endured by those souls. However, everyone understood that remembering past events is essential in ensuring that they never again occur.

A round table discussion tackled how best to study and preserve recollections of the Holocaust, organised by the Union of Belarusian Jewish Public Associations and Communities. The central event of the Memorial Days was a mourning ceremony, held at the 'Hole' complex, in the centre of Minsk. Gathering townspeople, representatives of the Jewish Community of Belarus, rabbis, and clerics of the Belarusian Orthodox and Catholic churches, all paid trib-

ute to the memory of the innocent victims. Among those present was the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belarus, Vladimir Makei, the Chairman of Minsk City Executive Committee, Nikolai Ladutko, and the Plenipotentiary Representative for Religions and Nationalities, Leonid Gulyako, alongside diplomats, and visitors from Israel, among other countries.

"In modern Belarus, much is being done to preserve the memory of Holocaust victims," noted Vladimir Makei, adding that 'Hole' is a 'monument not only to tragedy, but to the feat of Jewish people'. He explained, "All the prisoners of the ghetto struggled for life and freedom. Moreover, they were not alone in their struggle and grief. Many Belarusians risked their own safety to rescue Jews from inevitable death, hiding them in their homes and helping them to escape into the woods, to the partisans."

According to Mr. Gulyako, the Jewish people will never forget this

help, and have already awarded over 700 Belarusians the distinguished title 'Righteous Among The Nations' for heroism and compassion. At the memorial ceremony, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Israel to Belarus, H.E. Mr. Yosef Shagal, awarded the title 'Righteous Among The Nations' and a commemorative medal, to the daughter of Galina Bilydukevich.

During the occupation, Galina Bilydukevich rescued the Jewish family of her friend, Galina Kostelyanets, from massacre. The Chairman of Minsk Executive Committee, Nikolai Ladutko, stressed the scale of the tragedy, saying, "While it was raining water on Tankovaya Street, on Zaslavskaya Street, streams of human blood ran; those who suffered were being destroyed but remained unbroken... Today's Memorial Day is one of the key components of preparations for the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Belarus from the Nazi aggressors. We'll celebrate this anniversary together:

Belarusians, Russians, Ukrainians, Jews, Poles, and all who live in our country."

Archbishop Gury of Novogrudok and Lida, the Executive Officer of the Belarusian Exarchate, spoke words of compassion on behalf of the Head of the Belarusian Orthodox Church, the Metropolitan of Minsk and Slutsk Filaret. He emphasised, "Expressing sympathy with the Jewish people today, we cry also for our personal troubles, and the grief of all those who suffered indignity, persecution or death at the hands of Hitlerite executioners. I especially wish to honour all those who endured those times of catastrophe and can now tell us about the horrors of war from their own life experiences."

During WWII, the Germans created more than 200 ghettos within the territory of Belarus, imprisoning hundreds of thousands of people. The words 'It happened!' sounded out at the meeting; our debt is to remember, so that it might never happen again.

Counting to ninety precisely

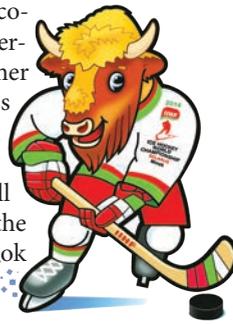
Ministry of Foreign Affairs site showing changes to EU Schengen Zone visa rules

According to the latest regulations, the total period of time a traveller may stay in the Schengen Zone is 90 days per six-month period (180 days) regardless of countries entered. No exceptions will exist for those holding annual visas and all terms of stay within 180 days will be summarised. Tourists staying longer than three months will be denied entry and may experience problems in having further visas issued.

Service staff learning English

English-Russian phrase books have been prepared for those working for Minsk shops and public catering sites, to help them serve international customers during the 2014 IIHF World Championship

At the initiative of the Central Administrative Consumer Market Board, of Minsk Executive Committee, two electronic manuals have been published by the Belarusian Trade and Economics University of Consumer Co-operatives (BTEU). Work on the manuals has taken all summer, with the first phrase book containing nine chapters,



covering 45 pages: themes include 'The City', 'Cars', 'Restaurants and Cafés', 'Pharmacies' and 'Hotels'. The other edition has just seven pages, comprising the most basic phrases — such as greetings, farewells and giving directions.

Golden Ring for tourists

New tourist brand created by National Academy of Sciences

The Minsk City Tourist Ring route is to include the most interesting historical and cultural sites near the capital, guiding visitors on an unforgettable experience, notes Alexander Lokotko, the Director of the Centre for Belarusian Culture, Language and Literature at the National Academy of Sciences. He tells us, "The 2014 World Ice Hockey Championship will have a tight match schedule, so guests are likely to limit their travel to within the Minsk Region and the capital itself. Accordingly, we've explored those sites of historical and cultural interest which are likely to prove most popular, for inclusion on the route."

The featured sites include the Czapski family estate, in the village of Priluki, and Dudutki Folk Museum, alongside the memorial complex of Trostenets and places associated with famous Belarusian writer Yanka Kupala, in the village of Studenka.

Eco-accommodation which saves

First multi-comfort house constructed in Dzerzhinsk

By Svetlana Semenova

At an ecological conference recently, I heard from a German colleague that a private house can provide itself with its own energy. Solar panels on the roof of his cottage produce enough electricity to supply his house and to sell any excess to the national electrical network. It appears that this is not a new occurrence for Belarus either, as one pilot multi-comfort house has been already built in Dzerzhinsk.

"At the heart of its construction are the concept principles of sustainable development, and one of them says 'we cannot live, borrowing from future generations, while exhausting resources



First multi-comfort house

and worsening the quality of the environment'. We should preserve the conditions and resources so those future generations will have the possibility to cover their own needs," explains Alexander Kucheryavy, the Chief Architect of the project.

According to him, with the biggest consumers of the

world's generated energy being buildings, using around 40 percent, it is impossible to do without the help of architects, builders and scientific research institutes while dealing with this issue. The majority of designers and researchers see the solution as building 'passive houses', where heat losses are mini-

mised, and consequently, energy consumption is reduced.

These principles formed the basis of the Belarusian multi-comfort house. The architect notes, that whilst the emphasis is placed on comfort in the premises, at the same time the house is environmentally friendly, and efficient from the point of view of energy consumption.

The correct arrangement of the building helps to save energy. The south side of the house in particular accumulates heat, and light is provided by big windows, whilst the northern side remains cooler. Alexander Kucheryavy says, "The right arrangement of windows in the building provides, not

only the optimum daylight hours, but also negates the need of air conditioners in the hot season."

This saving on heating, electric power and water heating reduces the cost of the maintenance of the building. But there is also a negative side. The application of these energy saving technologies initially increases the cost of a property by an average of 10-15 percent. As a result, such houses cost around \$2,000 per square metre. However designers are optimistic about the project and see this as a reasonable price of the pilot house as, according to Germany's experience, the running cost of these dwellings decreases subsequently by 30 percent.