
SUMMARY, No. 9 (72), 2008

The issue was published shortly after the parliamentary elections conducted in Belarus on September 28, and contains several analyses on its background and the political consequences.

Director of the Belarusian Institute of the Strategic Studies (BISS) **Vital Silicki** in his «**The Game with Risen Stakes: Official Minsk's Quest for Legitimization**» writes on the political maneuvering of official Minsk before the election. After bloody Russian invasion on Georgia the frustrated Lukashenka regime sent some significant signals to the European political community (for instance discharging Lukashenka's co-runner in 2006 presidential election Alaksandar Kazilin), trying to achieve additional guarantees of its own stability and convince the western economic actors to invest in the Belarusian economy.

A political observer **Jury Čavusaŭ** in his «**The Balance of Power within the Belarusian Opposition before the Parliamentary Elections**» sketches the opposition activity between major political campaigns in Belarus as well as the redistribution of the opposition capital, detente towards the West, blackmail policies etc.

Political science professor from the European Humanities University **Taciana Čulickaja**, in her «**Russian-Georgian War in the Media Space of Belarus: from the «Forced Friendship» to the Surrender after Unsuccessful Revolt,**» retraces the reaction of the official media to the Russian-Georgian war, which was relatively moderate and even critical towards Russia in spite of the initial expectations. The official media adopted the pro-Russian rhetoric only after the strongly-worded statements made by the Russian ambassador in Belarus Mr. Alexander Surikov and other Russian politicians and on the threshold of the official meeting between the Belarusian and Russian presidents in the end of August.

Mentioned above **Vital Silicki** and his colleague from BISS, political expert **Dzianis Mieljancoŭ** in their «**Parliamentary elections: Glass Half-Full or Glass Half Empty?**» express doubts that the rapprochement between Belarusian regime and western political community including EU and USA could be a stable and durable process. They argue that the dialogue was initiated without establishing the basis for common values, tough conditionality, and clear and non-negotiable benchmarks for the new accommodating moves towards the Belarusian authorities. Hence, the dialogue looks like political bargain, because it depends on the momentary geopolitical juncture and the variable political interests. The Belarusian regime, rooted in the Eurasian despotism, remains incompatible with the modern European political culture.

Finally a political expert of the European Council on Foreign Relations **Andrew Wilson**, in his analysis «**Belarus's Post-Georgia Elections: A New Paradigm or the Same Old Balancing Act?**» tries to forecast the short term policy implications of new Lukashenka 'titoist' game, i.e making periodic and secondary overtures to the West to secure the maximum gains in the primary game with Russia.

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A set of essays «**Why I Became a Civic Activist, but my Classmates Didn't**» tells on the motivations of the decent, which urge some prominent young leaders and personalities on political or public activism. Among the authors are Viciebsk-based activists **Volha Karač** and **Vital Broŭka**, Minsk-based **Darka Słabčanka**, **Juraś Mielaszkievič**, and **Michaś Paškievič**; **Aleś Čyhir** from Babrujsk, and **Aleś Zarembiuk** from Masty.

Editor in chief of «CD-mag» multi media magazine **Iryna Vidanava**, in her «**New Media as a Form of the Youth Resistance**» considers the Internet as a last stronghold of the independent Belarusian journalism under Lukashenka rule. The political commentator of the Radio Liberty Belarusian service **Jury Drakachrust** in his «**The Cultural Types and the Political Process**» sorts out the cultural preconditions for the existing political orientations within the Belarusian society. The former deputy chief of the oldest oppositional party in Belarus, Belarusian Popular Front (Bielaruski Narodny Front in Belarusian), **Aleś Michalevič**, in his «**Generations in Belarusian Popular Front**,» reconstructs its history, including intergeneration divisions within the party, the clash of the personal ambitions etc. The head of the of the Belarusian-American Association, oldest and biggest Belarusian national organization in the United States, **Viačka Stankievič**, in his «**The New Wave of Emigration: Different Goals and Values**,» suggests that the Belarusians, who emigrated in the United States not long ago, are generally more consumption-oriented than their compatriots who arrived to the US after WW II. He argues that a majority of the emigrants in the new wave are not interested in Belarusian issues, and that they do not participate in public activities. Many of them are only interested in their careers.

Professor **Lucan Way** from the University of Toronto (Canada), in his «**The Power and the Weakness of the Modern Authoritarian Regimes**,» states that the political regime of Belarus is not an impenetrable stronghold, but rather has both strengths and weaknesses. However, the society's ability to exert any pressure upon this regime is limited.

The ARCHE issue presents for the Belarusian readers the rendition of **Kathleen J. Hancock**, political scientist from the University of Texas, San Antonio, piece «**The Semi-Sovereign State: Belarus and the Russian Neo-Empire**», originally published in «Foreign Policy Analysis» Vol 6, p.117—136. (2006); fragments **Noam Chomsky** popular book «**Understanding Power**;» as well as lyrics of the Belarusian poets **Andrej Dyńko** and **Andrej Chadanovič**; and a short essay of Mahiloŭ based essayist **Vasil Aŭramienka** in memory of Alexander Solzhenitsyn.