Chapter 4

BELARUSIAN PARTIES.
BELARUSIAN POLITICIANS

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THE ABOLISHMENT OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S MONOPOLY
AND THE EMERGENCE OF A MULTI-PARTY SYSTEM

The development of a multi-party system in Belarus after the break-up of the USSR was not based on old traditions*. A multi-party system was not an option in Belarus after 1939, if not earlier, as the entire territory of today's Belarus was a part of the USSR. Too much time had passed and, in the intervening period, the national elite that could have preserved the old traditions, if only partially, was almost completely annihilated by Stalin's repression.

The development of a new party system in Belarus was stimulated by external factors, specifically broad-scale national democratic movements in other countries of the former USSR, and primarily in the neighbouring Baltic states and Ukraine, as well as the active democratic-minded Russian intelligentsia, primarily in Moscow and Leningrad (St. Petersburg).

Democratic feelings began to spread across an increasingly wider strata of society, among the elites and ordinary people alike. During the first years of perestroika, the Communist Party retained full control over the USSR and the efforts of all democratic groups focused on fighting this main adversary. The political process was marked by opposition to the authoritarian rule of the Party.

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* An overview of Belarusian political parties in English is available at http://www-public.rz. uni-duesseldorf.de/~nordsiew/belarus.html. Information in English concerning Belarusian legislation and the political system is available at the following web pages: http://jurix.jura. uni-sb.de/~serko/law_pol/law_pol.html, http://www.belarus.net/softinfo/lowcatal.htm, http://www.belarusnews.de/, http://www.belarusian.com/chronology/.

A significant portion of the present democratic political elite began their political carriers in various informal associations. In the second half of the 1980s these associations mushroomed in Belarus (Talaka, Tuteyshyya, Pakhodnya, Uz'horye, and many others) engaging in educational activity and historical restoration, trying to reintroduce traditional national holidays, launching local studies excursions and literary evenings, collecting signatures in favour of school education in Belarusian, etc. The political charge of all those associations, inevitable under the condition of state oppression of the national language and culture, finally resulted in the establishment of the Belarusian Popular Front (BPF) «Adradzhenne» (Revival), a socio-political movement that held its constituent congress in 1989. BPF was modelled after similar movements in other republics. Similar to the Lithuanian «Sajudis» and Ukrainian «Rukh», BPF ideology combined national revival with democratic reforms, emphasising the renaissance of the national language and culture. The Front soon became a powerful social force, the flagship of the democracy movement in Belarus. The original members of BPF today comprise the backbone of four political parties: BPF «Adradzhenne» itself, the Conservative Christian Party BPF, the Belarusian Social Democratic Party (Popular Hramada) and the Belarusian Social Democratic Hramada.

For BPF members, national revival and the sovereignty of Belarus were always the highest values, whereas other participants in the Belarusian democratic movement (Russian speakers supporting Russian culture) became active during the general Soviet trend of protest. The Russian-language democratic movement in Belarus traces its origin back to 1987 when the «Contemporary» discussion club was founded in Minsk. Its members were economists, journalists, and philosophers promoting democratic ideas and criticising the political system of the Soviet Union. Club activists as well as the Belarusian members of the «Democratic Platform in the CPSU» (the Party's democratic wing) formed the United Democratic Party of Belarus (UDPB) in 1990, the first political party officially registered in Belarus. Other organisations of the Russian-speaking democratic elite were

the Movement for Democratic Reforms founded in 1991 and registered the following year (the Belarusian counterpart of its Russian namesake), and the Civic Party founded in 1994. Later, a larger part of this Belarusian elite consolidated in the United Civic Party founded in 1995 as a merger of the United Democratic Party of Belarus and the Civic Party. Initially, the Russian-language democrats attached little importance to the existence of Belarus as a national state, instead focusing on economic reforms and general democratisation of society. Even when the Soviet Union was at the brink of collapse after the failed 1991 coup in Moscow, they argued against Belarus leaving the USSR based on economic reasons. However, their position on the issue of Belarus' independence changed over time.

In the last year of the USSR's existence, a number of new parties emerged in addition to CPB, BPF and UDPB. In February 1991, farmers formed the Belarusian Peasant Party advocating reform of agriculture and the abolishment of collective farms. In March, a group of BPF members to whom the party's economic programme appeared far too radical founded the Belarusian Social Democratic Hramada. In June, the Belarusian Christian Democratic Association was formed followed by the National Democratic Party in July. The latter two groups failed to have any real social impact and were merely an echo of BPF in terms of ideology.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PARTY SYSTEM

1991 – 1996

A new stage in the development of the party system began in 1991 with the failure of the August *putsch* of the Soviet orthodox nomenclature and the collapse of the USSR. The BPF faction in the Supreme Soviet succeeded in suspending the Communist Party of Belarus. The Parliament declared Belarus independent; national democrats won against the communists. The political field began to rearrange as new political parties mushroomed, their number peaking to 34 before the first parliamentary elections in independent Belarus were held in 1995. In fact, almost half of these parties were founded in the year prior to the elections.

Socialist «equality,» the absence of private property and the closed nature of Soviet society left post-communist Belarus scarcely structured. Therefore the emergence of new political parties after the break-up of the USSR was, in a certain sense, chaotic. They were often founded on no real foundation, social basis or ideology, and served merely as a political platform to promote a person or small group of individuals. Although the traditional left-right spectrum could be applied to Belarusian political parties, it did not reflect the most essential social contradictions and trends.

However, there were distinct lines of division, both in society and party development:

1) positions on belarusification (i.e., the revival of the national language, culture, education, etc);

2) attitudes to democratisation and market-oriented reforms;

3) positions on state sovereignty versus membership in the Soviet Union (later replaced by integration with Russia).

During the initial years in the development of a party system the first two criteria were the most important and were the lines that separated the national democrats (BPF and BSDH) from the former communist nomenclature. However, in 1992–94, when belarusification was a

policy pursued by the state and almost everybody, in one way or another, admitted the need to reform, the importance of the third criterion increased. Economic deterioration coinciding with the arrival of independence fuelled ideas of restoring a union state together with other former Soviet republics. Integration with Russia and other former sister countries was the leitmotif of the 1994 presidential election as well as the elections to the 13th Supreme Soviet in 1995 thereby creating two implicitly opposed camps. It is worth noting that despite minor differences, the adherents and adversaries of that integration largely shared the same views on belarusification as well as economic and social reforms (positively or indifferently viewed by adversaries of integration with Russia, negatively or indifferently by adherents).

The «integrators» camp was led by the Belarusian Party of Communists (BPC), founded in 1992 as a successor to the CPB. The communists consistently professed restoration, calling for the renewal of the USSR. Founded the same year, a radical pan-Slavic party, the Slavic Assembly «Belaya Rus» (White Russia) declared its main goal as «uniting fraternal Slavic peoples.» Other advocates of a renovated USSR included the Liberal Democratic Party and the Agrarian Party; integration with Russia and other former Soviet countries was also the motto used by midget parties founded by dark-horse politicians as an instrument to forward their own personal political careers.

In 1993 the integrators attempted to consolidate in the Popular Movement of Belarus (PMB) that declared restoration of the USSR its main goal. This movement was made up of the Slavic Assembly «Belaya Rus», BPC and a number of smaller parties and organisations. The founding of PMB was strongly supported by Kebich's* government, which planned to use the movement in the struggle for the presidency. However, the Popular Movement broke up before the presidential election, «Belaya Rus» and other organisations supporting Alyaksandar Lukashenka, the communists backing Vasil Novikaw, while the remaining member organisations and the movement leader Syarhey Haydukevich continued to support Vyachaslaw Kebich.

* All the proper names of Belarusian politicians are transcribed from Belarusian.

The opposed independentist camp naturally grouped around the national democratic BPF and BSDH. The above mentioned parties of Russian-speaking intellectuals — UDPB and the Civic Party — gradually came to support the position of independence for Belarus. Their decision was probably due to the worsening image of Russia with its increasing pro-Communist feelings as well as to simply «getting used» to sovereignty and understanding that an independent country opened better career opportunities for them. The independent camp was also joined by the Belarusian Peasant Party, the Belarusian Christian Democratic Association, the Belarusian Party of Women «Nadzeya» (Hope), the Belarusian Party of the Greens, the Belarusian Party «Zyalyony Mir» (Green World) and other small pre-electoral parties.

The 1994 presidential elections manifested the weakness of the Belarusian political parties: neither of the two second round candidates was a representative of a political party.

1996–2001

Alyaksandar Lukashenka's election as president and his authoritarian rule, finally installed through the constitutional coup in 1996, shifted the power balance in the party system. Lukashenka won under the watchwords of fighting corruption and integration with Russia, and was therefore welcomed and offered support by the communists and other adherents of the restoration of the USSR. However, Lukashenka soon made it clear that he needed no support from any political party. The dissolution of the 13th Supreme Soviet and the installation of a puppet House of Representatives in 1996 made the activity of political parties aimed at gaining seats in Parliament senseless, as under the new constitution the legislature had no real power. The ideological differences of the parties moved into the background; most important now was the position toward president Lukashenka and the constitutional coup he orchestrated. The parties faced the choice of whether to oppose the dictatorship (thus joining the black list of organisations and individuals with no access to state-owned media)

or turn into pseudo-parties, abandoning the struggle for political power altogether.

The core of the opposition to Lukashenka's regime was comprised of BPF and the United Civic Party (UCP, the party resulting from the merger of UDPB and the Civic Party). BPC and the Agrarian Party also expressed their position against Lukashenka. The presidential administration initiated a split in the BPC (part of its members left the party) and restored the Communist Party of Belarus, which pledged its loyalty to the regime. The Agrarians also divided into adherents and adversaries of the president and de facto fell apart. The split also extended itself onto the Belarusian Social Democratic Party (Popular Hramada) that appeared in 1996 through the merger of BSDH and the Party of Popular Accord (PPA). PPA then dropped out and the Popular Hramada took an anti-presidential position. The opposition was also joined by the Belarusian Party of Women «Nadzeya» and by the Belarusian Party of Labour (based both on trade unions).

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), whose policy is totally determined by its ideologically inscrupulous leader Syarhey Haydukevich, after long consideration gave in to the instinct of political self-preservation and became an opposition party. Personal ambitions prevented Haydukevich from coming to terms with the reality of a «one politician country.»

The parties loyal to the regime, together with CPB, have no influence whatsoever on the situation in the country or government policy. Their very existence and participation in representative organs of power serve exclusively (but ineffectively) to mask the reality of dictatorship.

Like the Communist Party before 1991, Lukashenka is currently forcing all democratic-minded social groups to consolidate. As early as summer 1996, before the referendum, the seven most influential opposition parties established a roundtable body to co-ordinate activities aimed against the dictatorship. In October 1996 a national congress «For the Defence of Democracy, against Dictatorship» was held. In 1999, after OSCE-initiated negotiations between the

authorities and the political opposition, a Consultative Council of Opposition Political Parties was founded by BPF, UCP, BPC, BSDP and BSDH (the Belarusian Social Democratic Hramada, the right wing of the social democrats that left BSDP in 1998), the Belarusian Party of Labour (BPL), and «Nadzeya.» Following the initiative of Hans-Georg Wieck, head of the OSCE Consultative and Monitoring Group in Belarus, LDP and the socio-political association «Yabloko» (Apple) was also included in the Consultative Council; however, they subsequently left it. After the January 1999 Congress of Democratic Forces, representing all influential political parties, the Co-ordination Council of Democratic Forces (CCDF) was founded, which included BPF, UCP, PCB, BSDP (PH), BSDH, Labour, «Nadzeya», the ecological party «BEZ», the Assembly of Non-Governmental Organisations, the Charter-97 organisation and the Congress of Democratic Trade Unions. The Co-ordination Council was called upon to unite the opposition during the upcoming parliamentary and presidential election campaigns.

However, the Council failed to gather the authority to meet this goal, partly due to pressure from the government, the restricted access to mass media and the methodical discrediting of opposition politicians by the state-owned media, but partly also due to the low level of professionalism among opposition politicians. The possibility for democratic parties to convey their ideas to the broad public were severely limited. The authorities brutally dispersed demonstrations and pickets, arrested members of the business community who supported opposition parties, threatened to fire political activists from jobs or educational establishments — all to build up an atmosphere of terror that would make it impossible for parties to grow stronger. Informational isolation induced suspicion; it became almost fashionable to accuse political opponents of ties with the Belarusian or Russian secret services (who were hardly indifferent to the activities of opposition parties). Although all of them seemed to admit the need to create a strong opposition to the regime, in practice the Belarusian parties saw more splits than alliances after 1996. This can be interpreted as natural at this stage in the development of a party

system, when politicians seek their own place on the left or right.
Some parties split when their co-founders discovered they actually
held different views. Thus, BSDH split in 1998. In 1999, after a failed
attempt to stage a presidential election, BPF split and its more radical
wing — the Conservative Christian Party BPF — moved away from the
rest of the opposition. Uneasy personal relations between yesterday's
party cohorts complicated co-operation between opposition parties.

In 2001, polling showed that the chances of a united opposition
candidate winning the election were so poor that the Co-ordination
Council itself chose not to nominate a candidate and delegated this
task to a coalition of four non-party candidates plus the communist
Kalyakin. The position of the Council was made yet weaker when the
BSDH said it might leave the coalition in connection with the public
statement made by the five democratic candidates favouring
integration with Russia. Later, BSDP (PH) and BPL announced they
would no longer co-operate with the Council. In July 2001 the leaders
of those parties announced the founding of a left-centrist confederation
«For Social Changes.» The new entity, in their words, was set up to
counterbalance CCDF, which allegedly represented a right-centrist
position.

Thus the Belarusian party system in 2001 had the left and right
extremes (the PCB and the CCP BPF, respectively) as well as the left
and right centrist coalitions (the confederation «For Social Changes»
and the CCDF, with the special status of the BSDH that reserved the
possibility of supporting Zyanon Paznyak, CCP BPF leader, in the
election). Neither CCDF nor the left centre dared nominate their own
candidate, both supported «the five» and waited for them to single out
a united democratic candidate.

THE REGULATION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND ACTIVITY OF PARTIES

As mentioned above, the emergence of a multi-party system in
Belarus, like elsewhere in the USSR, was not based on tradition. Until
1990, the USSR had no laws that regulated the activity of parties or

defined their place in society. In October 1990 the Council of Ministers adopted «The Provisional Regulation for the Establishment and Activity of Public Associations in the Belarusian SSR» that for the first time used the term «political parties.» The provisional regulation was valid for the subsequent four years until October 5, 1994 when the «Law on Political Parties» was adopted. The new law defined the concept of political parties, their rights, sources of financing (banning foreign financing), the order of registration and governmental control. Under the law, at least 500 people were needed to establish a party. After the re-registration in accordance with the new law, Belarus had 34 political parties.

For Lukashenka's regime political parties are an annoying limitation to his authoritarian rule. The authorities may not take the liberty to openly do away with the parties, however, they are trying to create the least favourable conditions and an atmosphere of fear in which the parties can expect to be shut down at any time. Pressure is mounting on political parties and other non-governmental associations. Under the Law on Political Parties their activity is subject to review by the Ministry of Justice for compliance with their statutes. This provision allowed the ministry to call for the closure of the Christian Democratic Party in 1999 on the pretext that the party had not held its assemblies within the appropriate timeframe. In general, the ministry issues most warnings to political parties on the pretext of breaching the schedule of statutory activities; moreover, numerous warnings are issued due to «publications in the press that announce meetings, demonstrations and so on, and mention unlawful actions of that or other parties.» Any political party can be closed in case of «the reoccurrence, within the course of a year, of an act for which it was given a written warning.»

In early 1999 president Lukashenka issued the decree «On Selected Measures to Regulate the Activity of Political Parties, Trade Unions and other Non-governmental Associations» under which all such organisations had to re-register before July 1 of that year. The activity of those organisations that failed to re-register would be suspended.

The decree also doubled the quantitative lower limit of a party to one thousand founders, and obliged parties to have regional branches in at least four regions of the country. A special commission was set up to administer the re-registration procedure and related issues, headed by then Vice Prime Minister U. Zamyatalin. Of the 43 parties registered at the beginning of 1999, 27 were considered active but some of those had too few members to comply with the new requirements and did not even try to re-register. As a sign of protest, the Belarusian Peasant Party did not file its application, joining BPF. Only five parties (the BPC, LDPB, «Nadzeya», the Republican Party of Labour and Justice, and the UCP) managed to re-register by the set date, as a result of which the deadline was pushed back to August 1.

The parties, independent media, and the public interpreted the decree as a method of increasing pressure on the political parties before elections to local Soviets, or even as an attempt to get rid of opposition parties (in 1999, the legitimate presidential term was to come to an end). Nevertheless, all of the most influential political parties did pass the re-registration process. It is possible that the original plans of the authorities to get rid of these parties were diverted by the very active public reaction.

THE AGRARIAN PARTY (AP)

The party was founded in 1992 as the United Agrarian Democratic Party, which was to be a political instrument of the agro-industrial lobby. The majority of members are executives of agricultural enterprises. The Agrarian Party advocated preserving large-scale agricultural production in the form of kolkhozes and sovkhozes, and in this respect opposed the Belarusian Peasant's Party, which represented farmers. On the other hand, the party conceded the possibility of allowing private ownership of land (although with essential limitations) and other components of a market economy strongly regulated by the state. The 2nd congress held in 1994 adopted the new name, Agrarian Party. Before the 1996 constitutional crisis, the

Agrarian Party was one of the largest with approximately 12,000 members. It co-operated with the Agrarian Party of Russia and the Peasants' Party of Ukraine.

During the presidential election campaign of 1994 and later during the parliamentary elections, AP campaigned on a platform of integration, employing anti-western rhetoric; it spoke in favour of creating a confederation of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine. Socialist slogans won AP candidate Dubko more votes than his BPC rival Vasil Novikaw (5.9% vs. 4.3%). During the 1995 elections to the Supreme Soviet, AP and BPC comprised the core of the left electoral bloc. After the elections, AP formed the largest parliamentary party faction (48 MPs, 24%). AP leader Syamyon Sharetski was elected chairman of the Supreme Soviet.

In the 13th Supreme Soviet, the Agrarians together with BPC and liberal MPs opposed the president. AP leaders even partly resigned from their pre-election slogans: with the backdrop of Lukashenka actively promoting Russian–Belarusian integration, speaker Sharetski told a press conference in early 1996 that the restoration of the USSR was unrealistic and a sovereign Belarusian state was to be built.

Within the AP faction, a split grew between the more and less liberal deputies. Part of the faction voted against denouncing the Belaya Vezha agreements (concerning the dissolution of the USSR), while the other part voted in favour. After 1996 the Agrarian Party split: about half of its parliamentary faction moved to the Lukashenka-created House of Representatives, while Syamyon Sharetski and other deputies refuse to acknowledge the new legislature. The authorities threatened to fire executives of agricultural enterprises if they supported the Agrarian Party in the respective areas. The party was virtually paralysed.

The Agrarian Party resumed its activity only in March 2000 — this time as a pro-presidential party. The loyal Agrarians held their first post-1996 congress, which elected Mikhail Shymanski, editor-in-chief of the state-controlled newspaper «Narodnaya Gazeta» as chairman (Syamyon Sharetski had been expelled from the party back in 1998).

THE BELARUSIAN ECOLOGICAL PARTY OF THE GREENS «BEZ»

The party «BEZ» appeared on October 28, 1998 through the fusion of two parties: the Party of the Greens of Belarus (founded in 1993 in Homel, headed by Mikalay Kartash) and the Belarusian Ecological Party (founded in 1994 in Minsk, headed by Mikhail Frydland). Kartash and Frydland became co-chairmen of the new party, which currently has approximately 1,500 members. The aims of the party are to build a society that ensures citizens' rights to environmental well-being, to promote the preservation of nature and to restore the environment. The party increases political activity before elections; the Greens were elected to the 12th and 13th Supreme Soviets and to local Soviets. However, in 1999 none of the candidates from the united party were elected to local Soviets.

«BEZ» is opposed to Lukashenka's regime, due to the unwillingness of the authorities to solve environmental problems. In November 2001, the party joined the CCDF.

The party has women's and youth movements and maintains contacts with the Swedish Green Party.

THE BELARUSIAN PARTY OF COMMUNISTS (BPC)

Chaired by Syarhey Kalyakin, the party was founded as the successor of the Communist Party of Belarus (CPB), the ruling party in the BSSR. With the collapse of the August 1991 coup in Moscow the Supreme Soviet of the Belarusian SSR suspended the CPB. However, as early as October 26, 1991, an organising committee was established to resume the Communist Party's activity, which soon transformed into an organising committee of a constituent congress of a new communist party under a new name. The congress was held in Minsk on December 6, 1991; it adopted statutes, a programme statement and elected the party's ruling bodies. The Ministry of Justice delayed the party's registration on the pretext that its statutes did not comply with the law, but eventually did register the party after the Supreme

Soviet made a decision in this regard. BPC activists joined organising committees that recruited people by re-registering old CPSU members. Within one year BPC had branches in Minsk and 130 other towns throughout Belarus, covering every region of the country.

On February 3, 1993 the 12th Supreme Soviet revoked its ruling on the suspension of the Communist Party of Belarus. In March 1993, the Central Committee of the CPB convened its 32nd special congress with the assistance of the BPC. On April 25, a CPB congress adopted a resolution to join BPC.

During the discussion on the appropriateness of establishing the office of president in Belarus, the BPC spoke against its introduction alleging it was a «bourgeois form of rule.» However, only the leader of the BPC faction voted against it in Parliament. The desire to retain and strengthen the power of an informal nomenclature, the background of many communist MPs, was stronger than their party discipline: all the other members of the communist faction voted in favour of establishing the office of president because they were sure of head of the nomenclature, Vyachaslaw Kebich, would be elected president.

With the establishment of the new office, the BPC decided to put forth a candidate (alleging the «historical experience of the Bolsheviks» who ran candidates for the Duma in tsarist Russia and Lenin's instruction to use any opportunity for propaganda). In March 1994, a Central Committee plenum nominated its secretary Vasil Novikaw as the party's candidate. In the election he garnered only 4.3% of the votes, the lowest record among communist candidates in post-Soviet countries. This record, paradoxically, can be explained exactly by the popularity of leftist slogans: the votes of the left-wing electorate were divided among as many as four candidates, Kebich, Lukashenka, Dubko, and Novikaw.

After the second round of voting, the communists accepted Lukashenka's victory and pledged support to him because of his pre-electoral themes of socialism and integration. The newly elected president, however, was secure without their support, and the BPC did not become a party of power.

The May 1995 elections to the 13th Supreme Soviet gave the BPC 22% of the seats in parliament due to the nostalgic sentiments of pro-Soviet elderly voters. Initially, the communist supported Lukashenka, particularly his policy of integration with Russia. However, his campaign against freedom of speech and the installation of a personal dictatorship forced the BPC to oppose the president as his policies threatened the very existence of parties with no preference given to the BPC. The July 1996 plenum of BPC's central committee declared that it was no longer possible to support the president's internal, social and economic policies. With the left wing of the political spectrum, BPC and the Agrarians, having declared open opposition to Lukashenka, the threat of impeachment became realistic.

BPC hardliners who dreamt of restoring the USSR and remained strongly opposed to the national democrats sharply criticised this decision by party leaders, using the party's newspaper «Tovarishch,» founded by the BPC in 1994, to do so. The Lukashenka administration used the party conflict for its own aim, to disorient citizens accustomed to voting for communists (i.e. for the USSR), by founding a communist pseudo-party. Shortly before the 1996 referendum the first, «renewal» congress of the Communist Party of Belarus (CPB) was held that severely criticised BPC leaders for colluding with «radical nationalist forces» and pledged support to presidential initiatives. Of the 1134 founders of the CPB, approximately 60% were above the age of 60.

After Lukashenka disbanded the 13th Supreme Soviet and installed a new «Parliament,» the National Assembly, 24 of the 45 members of the communist faction joined the new legislature.

The BPC was more affected by the establishment of Lukashenka's authoritarian rule and the 1996 constitutional coup than the other parties. The founding of a new old Communist Party of Belarus was too heavy a blow for the BPC. In 1997, BPC lost more than 4,000 members and by the end of that year, 18 party branches closed in various towns and districts. In 1994, communists chaired 25 city and district administrations; after 1996, almost all of them either left the

party or were dismissed from office. However, the split forced the BPC to evolve into a political party in the true sense of the word. In its initial years after its establishment, the revived Communist Party appealed to nostalgic voters and elderly people. The party largely retained the old Soviet rhetoric that sounded increasingly archaic as the years passed and was incapable of attracting new members and voters. Now that it lost both the monopoly on USSR nostalgia and state support, the BPC had to promote itself and its ideas in other ways, update its ideals and learn to co-operate with other political forces — activities communists had never done before. This is well illustrated by the following excerpt from Syarhey Kalyakin's speech to the 5th BPC Congress (March 6–8, 1999): «It is time we stopped being afraid of accusations like 'you stand in the wrong place' and 'you sit with the wrong man'. A politician, and that is what every communist should be, must be prepared to have dirt thrown at him… If we do not overcome doubt and fear, we will again find ourselves merely following events.» (He was referring to accusations of betraying communist ideals by collaborating with the right.) BPC participated in negotiations between the political opposition and the authorities and joined the Consultative Council of Opposition Political Parties; it did not, however, join the Co-ordination Council of Democratic Forces.

BPC is expected to continue its drift from the extreme left to the centre left. The experience of confronting a leftist dictator, Lukashenka, forced BPC to become more democratic than its counterparts in Russia and Ukraine. In the run up to the presidential election in 2001, Kalyakin was one of the five hopefuls who agreed to co-ordinate their actions for the sake of eliminating the authoritarian regime. He stated that his party's ideal was no longer the BSSR but the European Union.

BPC had the largest number of members (approximately 18,000) in 1996, shortly before it split up. As of January 1, 1999, the party had 9,237 members, branches in 119 districts and 19 towns, as well as 534 grass roots organisations.

Supported Kalyakin, later Hancharyk in 2001 election.

THE BELARUSIAN PARTY OF LABOUR (BPL)

Chairman: Alyaksandar Bukhvostaw, head of the trade union of automobile and agricultural machinery workers. BPL was registered on February 24, 1994. It identifies itself as a «social democratic» party with a «labour-based orientation.» It was founded with the aim of providing political support for the trade union and workers' movement through the defence of their interests and their representation in the organs of power, the press and elections. Its founders were the Belarusian independent associations of industrial trade unions (also headed by Alyaksandar Bukhvostaw) as well as democratic-minded activists of the trade union and workers' movement favouring reform of the trade unions. The party has branches in every regional centre of Belarus, as well as in Barysaw, Asipovichy, Babruysk, Salihorsk, and Zhodzina.

BPL is opposed to Lukashenka's regime. Its closest political ally is BSDP PH. In July 2000 the party joined the CCDF, but ceased participating in its meetings after BSDP PH suspended its membership.

In July 2001, BPL together with BSDP PH left the CCDF and announced the founding of a left-centrist confederation.

Supported Hancharyk in 2001.

THE BELARUSIAN PARTY OF WOMEN «NADZEYA»

Homepage: http://www.nadzeya.org/*. Chairwoman: Valyantsina Palevikova. «Nadzeya» (Hope) was founded on April 28, 1994 by the trade union of teachers and registered by the Ministry of Justice on June 3, 1994. The party was founded to increase the presence of women in politics, and mentions the following priorities in its programme: the defence of family, motherhood and childhood, an open society, democratic reforms, social justice as well as economic and political freedom. The party is made up of trade union leaders, activists of women's movements and unemployed women.

*   All the addresses as for September 9, 2001.

In 1996 «Nadzeya» joined the political opposition to the authoritarian regime, participated in the Congress of Democratic Forces and joined the CCOPP. In July 2000 it also joined the CCDF but suspended its membership in June 2001 under the official pretext that part of the democratic forces, UCP in particular, supported an outside nominee against the decision made by the Council.

Ideologically, the party is closer to left-centrist opposition parties, such as BPL, BSDP PH, and «BEZ.»

Polling has frequently shown «Nadzeya» to be the highest rated among all political parties — up to 8.4%. However, given the information blockade in the country, this is unlikely to be a true gauge of the real influence of the party on the political process. The high rating can be explained by the attractiveness of the party name to female respondents.

«Nadzeya» co-operates with a number of foreign women's organisations.

Supported Hancharyk in 2001.

THE BELARUSIAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC HRAMADA (BSDH)

Chairman: Stanislaw Shushkevich, speaker of the Supreme Soviet between 1991 and 1994. Approximately 1,000 members. BSDH is another successor of its namesake that existed between 1992 and 1996. Shushkevich's BSDH was founded in February 1998 by the more liberal element of BSDP PH, which was unhappy with the change in policy after Mikalay Statkevich was elected chairman of the party. Thus, the social democrats split into left and right camps headed by Statkevich and Shushkevich, respectively.

The new BSDH declared its priority task to be the restoration of the 1994 constitution. In 1999, BSDH joined the CCOPP, and in July 2000 the CCDF. The party's ideology was closer to BPF than BSDP PH (deputy chairman Aleh Trusaw was a member of the BPF soym).

Statkevich's party was initially strongly opposed to BSDH.

In 2001, after the five opposition candidates spoke in favour of

integration with Russia (a move rather guided by the current political situation) the BSDH executive committee issued a statement suspending its CCDF membership and pledged readiness to support Zyanon Paznyak, the CCP BPF nominee. This statement was later retracted. Polling showed a higher rating for BSDH (about 6 %) compared to the other parties, which can be explained by Stanislaw Shushkevich's fame and authority.

THE BELARUSIAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY «POPULAR HRAMADA» (BSDP PH)

Homepage: http://www.sdpb.net. Chairman: Mikalay Statkevich. Approximately 2,500 members. BSDP PH is one of the successors to the Belarusian Social Democratic Hramada (BSDH), a party that was founded by some members of BPF «Adradzhenne» on March 2, 1991. BSDH, following pre-Soviet traditions, declared itself the successor to the Belarusian Socialist Hramada that operated in Belarus at the beginning of the 20th century.

The first chairman of BSDH was Prof. Mikhas Tkachow, Zyanon Paznyak's deputy in BPF. When Prof. Tkachow died, he was succeeded by MP Aleh Trusaw, later chairman of the Society of the Belarusian Language. Despite essential differences in economic views, BSDH was initially very close to BPF «Adradzhenne,» as one of Hramada's priorities was the defence and revival of national values. In 1993, the gap between the two organisations grew due to BSDH's participation in the Association of Democratic Forces «Spring-94» which was founded by UDPB and the Belarusian Peasant Party and which BPF refused to join, due to its unwillingness to co-operate on equal terms with parties having less members and influence. In the 1994 presidential elections BSDH together with its new ally, UDPB, supported Stanislaw Shushkevich and not Zyanon Paznyak. However, in 1995 BPF and BSDH were still co-ordinating their activities while nominating candidates for the Supreme Soviet.

The 1995 elections were a catastrophe for all parties that

emphasised national symbols. The election results caused heated debate within those parties. BPF leader Zyanon Paznyak managed to retain both his position and previous priorities, whereas BSDH underwent an important change: on July 1, 1995, instead of Aleh Trusaw the party elected Lieutenant Colonel Mikalay Statkevich, leader of the banned Belarusian Association of the Military, who was forced to retire from the Army in 1993 due to his participation in the association. Since then the national cultural component of BSDH's programme moved into the background (reflecting the political trends in the country), and the party now began to seek allies on the left, although it remained on the right in relation to the national sovereignty. Mikalay Statkevich made it his goal to create a broad-based social democratic coalition. In summer 1995 BSDH and two marginal partners, the Party of Popular Accord (PPA) and the Party of All-Belarusian Unity and Accord (PABUA), signed an agreement concerning the founding of the Social Democratic Union (SDU) that ran collectively for the 13th Supreme Soviet during the by-elections. SDU deputies formed the 18-member «Union of Labour» faction headed by PPA leader Leanid Sechka. In January 1996, BSDH and PPA merged into a single party, the Belarusian Social Democratic Party «Popular Hramada.»

The events that followed showed how unimportant abstract ideologies of political parties were under the specific conditions of Belarus. The social democratic coalition was split by a new powerful political factor — the personality of president Lukashenka. Mr. Sechka and other former PPA members found jobs in the presidential administration; Lt Col Statkevich and members of the former BSDH were in the streets protesting against the establishment of the authoritarian regime. Members of «Union of Labour» were kept together by the faction name, if nothing else. After the constitutional crisis in November 1996 part of the former PPA pledged loyalty to the president, left the BSDP PH, and founded a pro-presidential party, the Social Democratic Party of Popular Accord (SDPPA). BSDP PH, headed by Mikalay Statkevich, remained in opposition.

Therefore, Mikalay Statkevich's activity created a division in BSDP PH. On one side, the increasingly leftist ideology and attempts at alliance with the PPA distanced the BSDP PH from the liberal national democratic politicians who founded the party (Aleh Trusaw, Stanislaw Shushkevich, etc.) and who eventually left it to establish a new one — the BSDH. On the other side, the party stood firmly against Lukashenka's regime and union with Russia, a position which made it difficult to achieve the aim set by Statkevich — a «broad-based social democratic coalition» with the national idea as a priority. The required social basis for it had not yet appeared.

In subsequent years BSDP PH participated in street rallies, in the Consultative Council of Opposition Political Parties and the Co-ordination Council of Democratic Forces. Simultaneously, it continued to slide left: it established close contacts with trade unions and their Belarusian Party of Labour. In 2000 BSDP PH did not follow the CCDF decision to boycott elections, which further worsened relations with the right wing of the CCDF and initiated a conflict between the majority in the party and its faction «For Unity» headed by Alyaksey Karol (the faction that boycotted the elections).

The logical follow-up of the uneasy relations between BSDP PH and the conservative elements in the CCDF was the party itself, together with the Belarusian Party of Labour, withdrawing from the Council in 2001 and again seeking to organise a centre left force. In July 2001 these two parties declared a left-centrist confederation «For Social Changes.»

Supported Hancharyk in 2001.

BPF «ADRADZHENNE». BPF PARTY

The Belarusian Popular Front «Adradzhenne» (homepage http://pages.prodigy.net/dr_fission/bpf/) was the first alternative to the Communist Party in Belarus. This movement emerged from the wave of national outrage caused directly by a discovery (made by Zyanon Paznyak and Yawhen Shmyhalyow) of mass graves of victims of Stalin's

repression in the Kurapaty suburb of Minsk. On June 3, 1988, the two scientists published a sensational article in the newspaper «Litaratura i Mastatstva» (Literature and Art) about the mass shooting of people in Kurapaty. A demonstration, in which 10,000 people participated, was held on June 19, and the authorities were forced to form a commission to investigate the mass grave. Four months later, on October 19, 1988 the founding meeting was held of «The Martyrology of Belarus,» a historical educational fellowship co-founded by the Union of Writers, Union of Cinematographers, Union of Painters and the editorial board of «Litaratura i Mastatstva.» On the proposal of Zyanon Paznyak, the meeting established an organising committee of BPF «Adradzhenne,» conceptualised as a socio-political movement for democratic reforms in society and the revival of the Belarusian nation, through the participation of individuals and associations alike. The organising committee published a programme statement that declared the movement's orientation, namely democratic reforms, real sovereignty for Belarus, national renaissance, and human rights. The constituent congress of BPF, attended by approximately 400 delegates, was held on June 24 and 25, 1989 in Vilnius, Lithuania as the Presidium of the BSSR Supreme Soviet did not permit the meeting to be held in Minsk.

Initially, BPF was an association of informal cultural groups, organisations and individuals, who primarily supported the revival of the Belarusian language and culture. The issue of Belarus leaving the USSR had not yet been raised; the congress approved the movement's statutes which asserted that BPF operated within the BSSR Constitution. Zyanon Paznyak was elected chairman of BPF.

As the first broad-based democratic organisation, BPF immediately became the main voice and organiser of democratic reform among the public. The first opposition rally in Belarus sanctioned by the authorities was staged by BPF (a mere organising committee at that time) on February 19, 1989. The meeting, held under the historical national flags, was attended by approximately 40,000 people. A resolution was adopted at the meeting that demanded the ruling role of the Communist Party (asserted by the constitution) be revoked.

The same year a number of democrats backed by BPF were elected to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. In 1990 BPF candidates ran for legislatures of the BSSR. Approximately 100,000 people participated in a BPF demonstration against non-democratic elections. After the elections, BPF had a 37-member faction in the 345-member parliament — a ratio that hardly demonstrates the actual popularity of BPF at that time, due to the fact that the elections were largely rigged.

The BPF faction in the communist-dominated Parliament created the core of a democratic opposition. BPF MPs initiated the adoption of the Declaration of Sovereignty of Belarus, and the declaration of Belarus' independence. Despite the communist majority in Parliament, the BPF faction even succeeded in demanding the temporary suspension of the Communist Party of Belarus after the defeat of the Moscow coup in August 1991. All of the BPF's successes in the early 1990s were largely due to developments in other former Soviet countries. The Belarusian road to independence mirrored that of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Ukraine, but was delayed and less intense.

In its early days, opinions varied whether BPF was a political party. Technically, it was not a party; its leaders stated it was not a party and its statutes were not the statutes of a party. The movement's statutes allowed for collective membership and defined BPF as a «socio-political movement.» However, BPF set political aims and, in order to achieve them, participated in elections to local Soviets and the 12th Supreme Soviet of Belarus, thus providing reasons to consider the movement a political party. This contradiction between the official status and actual activity was removed in 1993 through the founding of the Party BPF that was to be active during election campaigns. Thus, from 1993 the political functions of the movement were assigned to the Party BPF, whereas the cultural functions remained with BPF «Adradzhenne» as a broad civic front. However, in 1993 the party had not actually separated from the front in terms of organisation.

BPF suffered its first defeat in 1992. The movement initiated a signature drive in support of pre-term elections to the Supreme Soviet. However, the Supreme Soviet refused to adopt the appropriate

resolution despite the 442,000 signatures collected. It was at this time that the influence of BPF began to wane. The nomenclature in Parliament, headed by Vyachaslaw Kebich, began plotting revenge (Stanislaw Shushkevich, Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, retired). The authorities commenced a large-scale campaign aimed at discrediting BPF and its leaders as well as the very goals and historical ideals of the national democratic movement. This campaign was stepped up with Alyaksandar Lukashenka's election as president. None of the BPF candidates were elected to the 13th Supreme Soviet in 1995. As with the previous election, BPF candidates encountered strong resistance from the authorities; however, this time the failure of BPF can also be explained by the rise of nostalgic pro-Soviet feelings in society caused by the deteriorating economic situation. BPF offered a liberal economic programme and a promising Baltic-Black Sea vector of foreign economic policy, but failed to offer anything attractive to the masses of post-Soviet Belarusian society with its catastrophically low level of liberal education and national self-awareness. (Country-wide BPF won about 10% of the votes, however, BPF's core base of support make up a structural minority that has no chance of being represented in the legislative.) Since 1995 BPF has no longer been the only leader of democratic forces in Belarus — they are represented by the parliamentary faction «Civic Action» grouped around leaders of the United Civic Party.

Because of the unsatisfactory results of the parliamentary elections, a group of BPF leaders resigned during the movement's *soym* (congress), including V. Vyachorka, head of the political commission, U. Antsulevich, head of the pre-electoral commission, and L. Barshchewski, member of the political commission. During this soym deputy chairman Yu. Khadyka proposed that the party separate from the front. In his opinion, the party should have more freedom of action and co-operate with other parties. He suggested the party and the front each have their own respective leaders and that the party perhaps might even change its name. Vyachorka backed Khadyka's proposal arguing that the movement BPF had to remain the standard bearer of

the national idea while the party had to become an expressly political force of conservative ideology. These proposals were not supported by BPF leader Zyanon Paznyak, nor adopted by the soym. The difference in views eventually led to a split in the movement.

In 1996 the role of BPF in the country's political life increased once again. Lukashenka's regime began to strictly control the electronic media and state-owned press as a result of which democratic forces had to resort to fliers and mass street rallies to reach the public. BPF was the only political party with experience in staging such actions in resisting a totalitarian regime. That year the youth wing of the movement, the Young Front, became increasingly important. Its leaders were very active in street demonstrations.

In 1996 Zyanon Paznyak had to leave Belarus, fearing his life was threatened by the authorities. Nominally, he remained chairman of BPF, while Lyavon Barshchewski was assigned acting chairman in his absence. During the next few years the difference of views among the BPF leaders grew into open conflict between the «politicians of conscience,» who apply BPF rhetoric to real circumstances as a show of their convictions, and the «politicians of responsibility,» who were ready to compromise with other opposition forces and among themselves in order to achieve the most important goal, establishing democratic order in the country. This conflict reached its peak during and after the alternative presidential elections on May 16, 1999. There were two candidates, Zyanon Paznyak and Mikhail Chyhir. The regional network of BPF, with its many branches, was used to organise local electoral commissions. It was impossible to stage a fully-fledged democratic election under a dictatorship. In fact, it was a kind of mobilisation action, that of civil disobedience, aimed to show that many citizens neither supported Lukashenka's power, nor considered it legitimate. The election finally lost any meaning when Zyanon Paznyak withdrew his candidacy on the pretext of «numerous breaches» during the preparations to the election. The majority of BPF leaders severely criticised his move while others stood by and called upon BPF members to quit the electoral commissions and sabotage their

work. Unable to follow the diverse views of the party leaders, many refused to do so. The BPF found itself on the verge of breaking up.

The 6th congress of BPF «Adradzhenne» was held on July 31 and August 1, 1999 and was followed by a resolution adopted by the soyms of the party and the movement about the inadmissibility of a split and the need for a second session of the congress planned for October 31. However, they also failed to reach a consensus in October. One of Zyanon Paznyak's opponents, Vintsuk Vyachorka, was elected chairman of BPF «Adradzhenne» while a radical minority of the BPF headed by Paznyak and Papkow founded a separate party — the Conservative Christian Party BPF, CCP BPF.

Vyachorka's BPF «Adradzhenne» then moved closer to the United Civic Party; these two groups were the most active participants in the Co-ordination Council of Democratic Forces. In 2001, BPF structures worked for the nomination of Syamyon Domash and later supported Uladzimir Hancharyk, the candidate of the united democratic forces.

THE CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIAN PARTY BPF (CCP BPF)

CCP BPF (homepage http://www.bpfs.boom.ru/) was registered by the Belarusian Ministry of Justice on February 28, 2000, shortly after the split-up of BPF «Adradzhenne». The new party declared itself the successor to the Party BPF and was headed by Zyanon Paznyak, founder and leader of the BPF «Adradzhenne» from 1989 to 1999, in exile since 1996.

Perhaps, the main difference between the two successors of the BPF «Adradzhenne,» the parties of Vyachorka and Paznyak, is formulated in the CCP's programme concerning relations with political and other non-governmental organisations and governmental structures: «CCP BPF does not participate in supraparty (interparty) bodies, created by socio-political forces. Party members act in respect to political issues only on behalf of their party.» The next provision, however, is more carefully paced: «CCP BPF directly co-ordinates its activity and takes the activities of other parties and organisations into account.»

The first political measure taken by CCP BPF was a declaration of «Belarusian Solidarity,» an action that implied collecting signatures against the Yeltsin-Lukashenka treaty concerning the union of Belarus and Russia, receiving applications for the citizenship of the Belarusian Popular Republic, and mass street rallies — all activities BPF had started before the split.

In 2001, Zyanon Paznyak attempted to run for president, causing considerable controversy even among his own traditional electorate. Many were concerned that his hopeless candidacy (polls showed Paznyak was the only politician with negative ratings above 50%) would play into Lukashenka's hands by dividing the protest vote. Paznyak's campaign ended having failed to collect the required number of signatures to register a candidate.

THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF BELARUS (LDPB)

 The party was founded in February 1994, modelled on and with the support of the Russian Liberal Democratic Party of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. The programme adopted by the constituent congress stated that LDPB was to «counter national democrats responsible for the break-up of the union state.»

LDP was initially considered a branch of Zhirinovskiy's party that was enjoying huge popularity in 1994 both in Russia and among the Russian (or Russified) populations in other former Soviet republics. However, as time passed and Zhirinovskiy's fame waned, Haydukevich began to distance the party from LDPR and Zhirinovskiy.

LDPB is a party of personality, the policies of which are totally determined by its leader Syarhey Haydukevich. The party has no clear ideology; instead, it backs any slogans that, in Haydukevich's view, may add to the party's and his own popularity at any given moment, no matter how mutually contradictory those slogans may be. For example, in October 1998 LDP submitted an initiative to hold a referendum concerning confederation with Russia. Arguing in favour of the referendum, Haydukevich then spoke about the closeness of

the Belarusian and Russian peoples and the great economic and political benefit of creating a confederation. The Ministry of Justice initially refused to register an initiative group for the referendum; one year later, Haydukevich's reasoning was as follows: «…why the authorities did not allow that plebiscite to be held? Indeed because they were perfectly aware that the collective opinion of the masses would not support their position. The people were sick of sweet-voiced promises of nobody-knows-what under the aegis of Moscow. This is what our party wanted to do: to provoke a lawful repulsion to the idea of the meaningless and, above all, unnecessary union.»

In November 1996, Haydukevich expressed reserved support for Lukashenka's policy. In the years that followed, LDPB oscillated between anti-western and pan-Slavic mottoes as well as support for Lukashenka and attempts at co-operation with democratic opposition.

In 2001, Haydukevich announced his intention to run for the presidency. He sent Lukashenka an open letter accusing him of «primitive populism,» stressing his illegitimacy and calling on him to resign. This insulting letter appeared to boost Haydukevich's popularity. Shortly before the presidential election Haydukevich sent another open letter to Hancharyk, the candidate of the united democratic forces, in which he demanded Hancharyk to withdraw. Observers interpreted this as evidence of a secret pre-electoral alliance between Lukashenka and Haydukevich.

According to LDP leaders, the party has more members than any other party, more than 20,000. Young Belarusian liberal democrats have their own homepage http://www.ldbsm.narod.ru/.

THE UNITED CIVIC PARTY (UCP)

Homepage: http://www.ucpb.org. Chairman: Anatol Lyabedzka, lawyer, former chairman of the commission for international affairs of the 13th Supreme Soviet. Honorary chairman: Professor Stanislaw Bahdankevich, doctor of economy, former president of the National Bank.

UCP was founded on October 1, 1995 by the merger of the United Democratic Party (founded in 1990 and chaired by Alyaksandar Dabravolski) and the Civic Party (founded in 1994 and chaired by Vasil Shlyndzikaw).

According to its statutes, UCP is a party with a liberal conservative orientation that places the rights of the individual above the interests of social groups, the state and nation. The main pillars of the party's ideology are human rights, an open society, the democratic form of government, the rule of law, the right to personal property, free enterprise and a market economy. UCP advocates a mixed system of parliamentary elections and the direct election of heads of local administrations. One of the party's goals is Belarus' membership in the Council of Europe and the European Union.

The United Civic Party has branches in every region and almost 80 districts of Belarus, and an active youth wing, «The Youth of the UCP.» In 1999 the party had approximately 2,500 members. UCP co-operates with influential foreign right wing parties and associations such as the European Democratic Union, the Union of Freedom (Poland), the Union of Right Forces (Russia), «Reforms and Order» (Ukraine), etc.

UCP unites a large share of the Russian-speaking political elite in Belarus. The party's initial emphasis was not on developing a strong membership but rather on engaging experienced and influential politicians and economists. Focused on economic issues and free from the emotional rhetoric inherent with BPF, UCP was attractive to the business community. In a certain sense, the party was more professional than BPF, its closest ally on the left-right spectrum; UCP was better suited for parliamentary work.

The turning point in the history of the United Civic Party was the parliamentary elections of 1995–96. The party received nine seats in the 13th Supreme Soviet and established a 22-member faction called «Civic Action» headed by Stanislaw Bahdankevich, then UCP chairman, which was joined by other liberal-minded MPs. However, for the party's transformation, the most important development was

not the number of its MPs but the fact that BPF failed to get even one candidate elected to the Parliament. Thus, the United Civic Party was the only right-wing force represented in the 13th Supreme Soviet, half of which was occupied by the left, the Agrarian Party and BPC.

In Parliament, the «Civic Action» faction played a role similar to that of BPF in the previous Supreme Soviet. The activity and influence of the faction were disproportional to its representational strength. Moreover, without BPF in Parliament, «Civic Action» had to take the position of the main defender of Belarusian sovereignty when Lukashenka initiated the integration of Belarus and Russia. Since 1991, the attitude of the Russian-speaking elite to the state's independence had been gradually changing from negative to indifferent to positive. However, when the question was put point-blank it had to make a choice, and it made it in favour of sovereignty by arguing against the ratification of the integration agreements. UCP now added the idea of reviving national culture and symbols and the establishment of Belarusian as the official language to its programme. UCP became, along with BPF, another centre of opposition to Lukashenka. In November 1996, none of the «Civic Action» members joined the House of Representatives created by Lukashenka.

As Lukashenka's authoritarian rule took hold, the participation of political parties in running the country diminished while the possibilities of promoting their ideas through the media were strongly limited. The original concept of the United Civic Party began to change step by step. The elitist UCP was forced to take to the street and organise mass rallies. In 1999, the party made the official strategic decision to gradually turn from an «elitist» to a «popular» party.

Since the dialogue among forces opposed to Lukashenka began, UCP played an important role in it. Members of the party made up a majority of the shadow government set up by the Supreme Soviet after the constitutional coup. UCP participated in both the Consultative Council of Opposition Political Parties and the Co-ordination Council of Democratic Forces. UCP's importance in the CCDF grew even more after the split up of BPF and the withdrawal of CCP BPF from co-

operation with other democratic parties (although it must be noted that the increase in UCP's importance was simultaneous to the waning of CCDF influence).

In 2000, the United Civic Party followed the CCDF decision to boycott the elections to the House of Representatives (some UCP members ran for and were even elected to the House of Representatives, having first suspended their membership in the party prior to submitting their candidacies). In 2001, UCP and BPF were the most adamant parties stressing the need to establish a single democratic candidate.

PRO-PRESIDENTIAL PARTIES

The Belarusian Patriotic Party, the Republican Party of Labour and Justice, the Slavic Assembly «Belaya Rus» (dissolved), the Communist Party of Belarus (headed by Valery Zakharchanka), the Agrarian Party (since its 4th congress in 2000), the Belarusian Social Sport Party as well as the movement «For Democracy, Social Progress and Justice» (DSPJ) are the «court parties» that unswervingly support all actions by Lukashenka and service the regime's ideological needs. Obtaining power is not their goal. Their ideology is either pan-Slavic (the former «Belaya Rus», the Belarusian Patriotic Party, and the DSPJ) or extreme left (the Communist Party of Belarus). Their existence serve exclusively to mask the reality of dictatorship.

LIST OF BELARUSIAN POLITICIANS

Abramava, Volha

Born on September 19, 1953 in Minsk. Doctor of Philosophy. Deputy to the 13th Supreme Soviet (Secretary of the Permanent International Affairs Committee). Opposed belarusification of the education system, harshly criticised the law on languages in the Belarusian SSR of January 26, 1990 during the 14th session of the 11th Supreme Soviet of the BSSR. In 2000 she was elected to the lower chamber of Lukashenka's Parliament.

Ahalets, Valyantsin

Born in 1950 in the village of Azyarany, Zhytkavichy District. Received military education. Appointed Minister of Interior on December 20, 1995. Dismissed on February 8, 1999 on the pretext of a «transfer to another job.» Since February 1999, Belarusian ambassador to Uzbekistan.

Aliyeva, Marya

Born on January 1, 1953 in the village of Vostraw, Lyakhavichy District. Worked at the Minsk Electrotechnical Works (1971–1993). Deputy president of the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (1994–1995), Manager of Affairs, then Chairman of the Free Trade Union Belarusian (1995–1999). Since May 1999, vice president of the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions.

Andreychanka, Wladzimir

Born in 1949 in Lyozna District. Agronomist. Graduated from the Highest Party School in Minsk. Worked on a collective farm, later appointed First Secretary of the Verkhnyadzvinsk District party organisation. Currently, Chairman of the Vitsebsk Regional Executive Committee (head of administration).

Antanovich, Ivan

Born on April 3, 1937 in the village of Domashy, Lyakhavichy District. Translator by education. Professor of Philosophy. A party functionary between 1977 and 1987 (head of the cultural department of the CPB Central Committee since 1979). Secretary and Politburo member of the Russian Federation Communist Party in 1990–1991. Returned to Belarus after the declaration of independence. In 1993–1995, director of the Belarusian Institute of Scientific and Technological Information and Prognoses, Deputy Minister (1995–1997) and Minister (1997–1998) of Foreign Affairs.

Antonchyk, Syarhey

Born on April 1, 1956 in the settlement of Pleshchanitsy, Lahoysk District. Worked for the BelVAR Instrument Factory. In 1990–1995, member of the BPF faction in the 12th Supreme Soviet. Stated his wish to be president in the run-up to the 2001 presidential election, but failing to garner the required number of signatures to qualify, he threw his support to Mikhail Marynich.

Babayed, Viktar

Born on June 25, 1950 in the village of Asonavichy, Dokshytsy District. Law school graduate. President of the Executive Office of the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (1994), Chairman of the Belarusian Independent Trade Union since 1995, President of the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions since 1998. Member of the Belarusian Social Democratic Hramada.

Bahdankevich, Stanislaw

Born on January 1, 1937 in the village of Shapavaly, Valozhyn District. Trained in finances and economics. In 1981–1991, headed the Chair of Monetary Circulation and Credit at the Belarusian State University of National Economics. In 1991–1995, President of the National Bank. Opposed the unification of the monetary systems of Belarus and Russia initiated by the Kebich government. Honorary chairman of the United Civic Party.

Barshchewski, Lyavon

Born on March 4, 1958 in Polatsk. Translator, Doctor of Philology, worked as a school teacher and taught in a university. In 1990–1995 member of the BPF faction in the 12th Supreme Soviet. Currently, Deputy Director of the Belarusian Humanitarian, Educational and Cultural Centre. In 1995–1999, Deputy Chairman of BPF, acting chairman for some time after emigration of Zyanon Paznyak.

Batura, Barys

Born in 1947 in Vawkavysk. Mechanical engineer. Career includes stints from Director of the Vawkavysk Municipal Services Complex to Deputy Prime Minister. Currently, Chairman of the Mahilyow Regional Executive Committee (chief of administration).

Bazhelka, Aleh

Born on October 27, 1954. A keen adherent of Lukashenka after the 1994 elections. Appointed Prosecutor General, dismissed on November 27, 2000 in connection with the «missing» politicians scandal.

Belenki, Yury

Born on May 5, 1960 in Minsk. Financier. Worked for the Ministry of Finance and later for industrial enterprises. Member of BPF faction in the 12th Supreme Soviet (member of Planning as well as Budget and Finance Committees). Since September 26, 1999 Deputy Chairman of the CCP BPF.

Bukhvostaw, Alyaksandar

Born on November 22, 1944 in Oryol (Russia). Engineering graduate. Worked for GomSelmach, an agricultural machinery plant. Chairman of the trade union of Automobile and Agricultural Machinery Workers, Co-chairman of the Association of Independent Trade Unions in Industry. Since 1995, deputy to the 13th Supreme Soviet, member of the Social Policy and Labour Committee. Chairman of the Belarusian Party of Labour

in 1993–99, party leader afterwards. Confidant of Uladzimir Hancharyk during the run-up to the presidential election in 2001.

Byalyatski, Ales

Born on September 25, 1962 in the settlement of Vyartsilya, Sortavala District, Russia. Doctor of Philology. Deputy of the Minsk City Council in 1991–95. Founded the human rights organisation «Spring-96» (http://www.spring96.org/) in 1996, Director since 1998. Deputy Chairman of BPF «Adradzhenne» in 1999–2001.

Bykaw, Henadz

Born on August 1, 1957 in Krulewshchyzna, Dokshytsy District. Historian. Between 1978 and 1992 Chairman of the trade union board at the Minsk-based Automated Production Line Factory. Chairman of the Belarusian Free Trade Union (1991–96). Chairman of the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (1996–99).

Chyhir, Mikhail

Born on May 24, 1948, in the village of Vusava, Kapyl District. Financier. Board Chairman of Belagraprambank until appointment as Prime Minister in 1994. Voluntarily resigned before 1996 referendum. Worked in Moscow as manager of the Russian representation of the GEA business concern. Returned to Minsk on May 16, 1999 to participate in the «alternative presidential elections.» Arrested and spent half a year in prison. Ran for president in 2001 but failed to collect signatures. Confidant of Uladzimir Hancharyk. A significant amount of information concerning Mikhail Chyhir can be found at http://www.ilhr.org/belarus/chigirversion.htm, and in Belarusian and Russian at http://chyhir.cjb.net/. Official web site: http://www.chigir.org.

Dabravolski, Alyaksandar

Born in 1958 in the village of Sula, Stowptsy District. Engineer (1982), lawyer (1995). Deputy Chairman of the UCP National

Committee. Deputy of the USSR Supreme Soviet in 1989-91. Deputy to the 13th Supreme Soviet, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Media and Relations with Non-governmental Associations.

Damashkevich, Mikalay

Born in 1949 in the Homel region. Mechanical engineer. First Secretary of the Syanno District CPB Committee when Belarus declared independence. In 1995 appointed Director of the Presidential Inspection Service and later Chairman of the Committee for State Control. Appointed Chairman of the Minsk Regional Administration on December 2, 1998.

Daneyka, Pavel

Born on April 3, 1961 in Minsk. Economist. Worked for state and non-governmental organisations. Currently, President of the Center for Development of National Competitivity. Since 1991, member of the United Democratic Party, and later the United Civic Party. Chairman of the UCP Minsk city branch. Since April 15, 2000, Deputy Chairman of the UCP National Committee. Deputy to the 13th Supreme Soviet.

Dawhalyow, Vasil

Born on May 25, 1951 in Rahachow, Homel Region. Electrical Engineer and Economist-Manager. Deputy to the 12th Supreme Soviet. Director the Presidential Inspection Service after Lukashenka 's election as president in 1994. Appointed Deputy Prime Minister on October 10. On March 13, 2000, dismissed and appointed Chairman of the Berastse Regional Administration.

Domash, Syamyon

Born on January 2, 1950 in the village of Turashy, Lyakhavichy District. Graduate of Babruysk Automotive Transport College and the Industrial Planning Faculty of the Belarusian State University of National Economics. Worked as automobile repair mechanic and engineer. Manager of automotive depot between 1974 and 1977. Director of

Automobile Works No. 1 in Horadnya (Hrodna). From 1982 to 1987
Director of the Industry and Transport Department of the Horadnya city
CPB Committee and Second Secretary of the Kastrychnitski District
party Committee. In 1987 elected Chairman of the Executive
Committee of Lida, Horadnya region. In 1990 elected Chairman of the
Executive Committee of Horadnya. In 1991–93 Chairman of the
Executive Committee and Soviet of Horadnya. In 1993–1994
Chairman of the Horadnya Regional Executive Committee and Soviet.
Deputy to the 12th and 13th Supreme Soviets. In May 1996 elected
to the Presidium of the 13th Supreme Soviet. In November 1996, one
of 70 MPs to sign statement in regard to impeachment of the president.
Since 1997 Chairman of the Co-ordination Committee «Horadnya
Initiative.» On his initiative and with his active participation, the co-
ordination council «Regional Belarus» was founded in May 2000: a broad
coalition of non-governmental, political, and trade union organisations
from all regional centres and large cities in Belarus. Presidential candidate
in 2001, withdrew in favour of Uladzimir Hancharyk.

Dubko, Alyaksandar

Born on January 14, 1938 in the village of Ilava, Shumilina District.
Agronomist. His carrier took him from seed agronomist to Chairman
of the Horadnya Regional Soviet and Executive Committee. Member
of the Agrarian Party of Belarus, Central Board member since 1995.
Ran for president in 1994. Died on February 4, 2001.

Hanchar, Viktar

Born on September 7, 1957 in the settlement of Radzichava, Slutsk
District. Graduate of the Law Faculty of Belarusian State University.
Doctor of Law. Deputy of the 12th and 13th Supreme Soviets. In
September 1991, stated in Parliament that CPB had been suspended
unlawfully. In 1994, member of Lukashenka election team; for which
he was appointed Deputy Prime Minister. Later became an opponent
of Lukashenka. In November 1996 unlawfully dismissed as Chairman
of the Central Electoral Commission. Chaired the self-assigned Central

Electoral Commission during the 1999 alternative presidential election. Missing since September 16, 1999.

Hancharyk, Uladzimir

Born on April 24, 1940 in the village of Awhustova, Lahoysk District. Graduated from the Belarusian State University of National Economics and the Academy of Social Sciences (within the CPSU Central Committee). Member of the CPSU since 1964. Doctor of Economics. Since 1961 worked as an economist, accountant, and acting chief accountant for the Soviet farm «10 Years of the BSSR» in the Lyuban District. In 1965–70 First Secretary of the Lyuban District branch of Belarusian Komsomol. After 1970 worked as instructor of the Minsk Regional Committee and Second Secretary of the Dzyarzhynsk District Committee of the CPB. After attending a post-graduate course at the Academy of Social Science in 1976, Deputy Director of the agricultural department of the Minsk Regional Committee and First Secretary of the Cherven District CPB Committee. From 1982 to 1984, Inspector and Deputy Director of the Organisational and Party Work Department of the CPB Central Committee. After 1984, Second Secretary of the Mahilyow regional CPB Committee. Deputy of the 13th Supreme Soviet; Chairman of the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus (renamed the Belarusian Federation of Trade Unions). According to official data, received 15.4% of votes in the 2001 presidential election. Official web site: http://www.goncharik.org.

Haydukevich, Syarhey

Born on September 8, 1954 in Minsk. Military career. Served in Air Defence Forces. Between 1976 and 1991 commanded various posts in the army, including chief instructor of a group of Soviet military experts in Iraq (1982-83). In 1991-92, chief expert of the Department for National Security of the State Secretariat of Belarus. In 1992-94 appointed Chairman of the Cabinet Committee for Social Security of State Security, Internal Affairs, Defence, Border Forces Employees and Veterans. In 1991-94, headed the pro-governmental

Popular Movement of Belarus (PMB) which dissolved shortly after the 1994 presidential elections. Since 1995 leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Belarus. In 2000 chaired the organising committee of the political bloc «New Belarus — Unity.» Won 2.5% of votes in the 2001 presidential election. A biography of Syarhey Haydukevich can be found, in German, at http://www.belarusnews.de/news_de/2001/akten/985136171.shtml.

Hraznova, Lyudmila

Born in 1953 in the town of Dzyarzhynsk. Economist. Former Assistant Professor at the Chair of Economics of Belarusian State University. Deputy to the 13th Supreme Soviet. Member of the organising committee of «Charter-97». Actively campaigned for democratic forces during the election campaign of 2001.

Hrushavy, Henadz

Born on July 24, 1950 in Minsk. Professor of Philosophy. One of the founders of BPF «Adradzhenne.» Deputy to the 12th Supreme Soviet, member of the BPF faction. Re-elected to the 13th Supreme Soviet. In 1996, leader of the Belarusian Christian Democratic Party. Spent 1997–1998 in Germany evading arrest.

Hryb, Mechyslaw

Born on September 28, 1938 in the village of Savichy, Dzyatlava District. Graduate of Firefighters' College in L'viv in 1959 and Belarusian State University in 1967. Since 1959 associated with interior affairs departments, attaining the rank of police lieutenant-general in 1993. Deputy to the 12th Supreme Soviet, Chairman of the National Security, Defence and Crime Committee until being elected Chairman of the Supreme Soviet in January 1994 (remaining chairman until January 1996). An opponent of Lukashenka. In 1996 was re-elected to the 13th Supreme Soviet (member of the International Affairs Committee). Member of the Belarusian Social Democratic Party «Popular Hramada» (1996); First Deputy Chairman of the party since

1999. Led the network of independent observers during the 2001 presidential election.

Ivashkevich, Viktar

Born on September 21, 1959 in Minsk. Worked for Minsk railroad. One of the founders of BPF «Adradzhenne» (appointed Deputy Chairman on October 30, 1999). Since 1997 editor-in-chief of the newspaper «Rabochy» (homepage http://kapp.nsys.by:8101/173/st6index.html#1). In 1999 elected Vice President of the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions.

Kaluhin, Leanid

Born on January 16, 1940. Mechanical engineer. Worked as a production master, section manager. Since 1993 president of the joint stock company «Atlant» and Director of the Minsk Refrigerator Factory. Member of the Council of the Republic and the Commission for International Affairs and National Security. Failed to collect the minimum number of signatures required to run as a candidate for president in 2001. Accused of financial crimes and arrested in November, 2001.

Kalyakin, Syarhey

Born on June 16, 1952 in Minsk. Engineer. CPB activist since 1983. In 1989 elected Second Secretary of the party committee for the Savetski District of Minsk. In 1994 elected party leader at the 4th Congress of the Belarusian Party of Communists (First Secretary of the BPC Central Committee). Since 1995 deputy to the 13th Supreme Soviet; later member of the parliamentary presidium. Chairman of the PCB faction. One of the authors of the alternative constitution drafted for the 1996 referendum. Failed to collect the minimum number of signatures required to run as a candidate for president in 2001, eventually supporting Uladzimir Hancharyk. A biography of Syarhey Kalyakin can be found, in German, at http://www.belarusnews.de/news_de/2001/akten/985185948.shtml.

Kanaplyow, Uladzimir

Born on January 3, 1954 in the village of Akulentsy, Mahilyow District. Geographer. Collected signatures for Lukashenka during the run-up to the 1994 presidential elections. Deputy of the 13th Supreme Soviet, presidium member, Chairman of the pro-presidential faction «Accord.» Currently, Vice-Chairman of the House of Representatives.

Karniyenka, Viktar

Born on July 29, 1957 in the village of Mkhinichy, Krasnapolle District. Engineer and economist. Deputy of the USSR Supreme Soviet (1989–1991), Deputy Chairman of the Homel City Soviet (1991–94). Member of the UCP political council, Chairman of the Homel regional UCP branch till November, 2001. Resigneg protesting against dim altitude of UCP during 2001 presidential campaign. Co-ordinator of the Assembly of Democratic Non-governmental Organisations for the Homel region.

Karol, Alyaksey

Born on May 29, 1945 in the settlement of Kopys, Vorsha District. Doctor of History. Since 1992 Deputy Chairman of the Party of Popular Accord. Currently, Chairman of a group of dissidents from BSDP PH.

Karpenka, Henadz

Born on September 17, 1949 in Minsk. Graduate of Belarusian Polytechnic Institute (1972). Director of the Powder Metallurgy Works in Maladzechna (1983–1990). Deputy to the 12th and 13th Supreme Soviets. Vice Speaker of the 13th Supreme Soviet. Chairman of the Party of Popular Accord until 1995, Deputy Chairman of the United Civic Party. Died in 1999. A biography of Henadz Karpenka can be found at http://www.belarus.net/parliame/korpenko.htm.

Kazlowski, Pavel

Born on March 9, 1942 in the village of Vawkawnya, Pruzhany District. Military education. Deputy Commander of the Belarusian

military region when Belarus declared independence. Appointed
Minister of Defence of Belarus on April 22, 1992. Chairman of the
Minsk city branch of the United Civic Party. Left the party in 2001.
Failed to collect the minimum number of signatures required to run
as a candidate for president in 2001. Confidant of Uladzimir Hancharyk.
A biography of Pavel Kazlowski can be found, in German, at http://
www.belarusnews.de/news_de/2001/akten/985186116.shtml.
Official web site: http://www.kozlovski.by.ru.

Kebich, Vyachaslaw

Born on June 10, 1936 in the village of Kanyushawshchyna, Valozhyn
District. Mechanical engineer. From 1958 to 1980 Production Manager.
CPB activist since 1980 (second secretary of the Minsk city and region
CPB Committees). In 1985–1990 Deputy Chairman of the BSSR
Council of Ministers, Chairman of the State Planning Committee of the
BSSR. Deputy of the BSSR and USSR Supreme Soviets. Chairman of the
Council of Ministers in 1990–94. Lukashenka's main rival in the 1994
presidential elections. Deputy to the 13th Supreme Soviet and later
member of the House of Representatives.

Khadyka, Yury

Born on June 23, 1938 in Minsk. Professor of Physics. Since 1989,
Deputy Chairman of BPF. In 1996, imprisoned for participating in the
«Chernobyl Path '96» march. Confidant of Uladzimir Hancharyk during
the 2001 presidential elections.

Khvastow, Mikhail

Born on June 27, 1949 in the village of Kazlowshchyna, Pastavy
District. Graduated from the Minsk State Pedagogical Institute of
Foreign Languages in 1975; Belarusian State University in 1989. First
Secretary of Belarusian mission to the UN when Belarus declared
independence. In 1997–2000, Belarusian ambassador to Canada.
On August 11, 2000 appointed presidential aide. Foreign Minister of
Belarus since November 27, 2000.

Klimaw, Andrey

Born on September 17, 1965 in Minsk. Construction worker. Member of the 13th Supreme Soviet. Partisan of impeachment in 1996. Arrested on February 11, 1998 and charged with financial dealings. Currently in prison. A biography of Andrey Klimaw can be found at http://www.belarus.net/parliame/klimov.htm.

Krawchanka, Piotr

Born on August 13, 1950 in Smalyavichy. Doctor of History. In 1985 appointed Secretary of the Minsk city CPB committee. In 1990–94 Minister of Foreign Affairs. Deputy to the 12th and 13th Supreme Soviets. Campaigned for Vyachaslaw Kebich during the run-up to the 1994 presidential elections. In mid-1995 joined the Belarusian Social Democratic Party «Popular Hramada». Since 1998 Belarusian ambassador to Japan.

Kryzhanowski, Yawhen

Born in 1955 in Mykolajiv, Ukraine. Theatre actor. Leader of «Khrystafor,» a satiric and comedic theatre in Minsk. Failed to collect the minimum number of signatures required to run as a candidate for president in 2001. Homepage http://www.kryzhanovski.tripod.com.

Kuchynski, Viktar

Born on July 2, 1958. Military career (1982), history and political science education (1990). Deputy to the 12th and 13th Supreme Soviets. Campaigned for Lukashenka in 1994 presidential campaign. Currently, deputy to the House of Representatives.

Kudzinaw, Uladzimir

Born in 1960. Financier. Former employee of Tax Police. In December 1992 Director of the «Ivatsevichy» Trade and Industrial Company. Deputy to the 13th Supreme Soviet, partisan of impeachment in 1996. In October 1997 arrested on charges of bribing an official and served prison sentence. Member of the United

Civic Party. Confidant of Uladzimir Hancharyk during presidential election campaign in 2001.

Latypaw, Ural

Born on February 28, 1951 in the village of Katayevo, Bakali District, Bashkortostan, Russia. Graduate of Kazan University (1973), later attended senior level courses of USSR KGB in Minsk (1974). After election of Lukashenka as president, appointed presidential aide for foreign policy. Since December 1998 Minister of Foreign Affairs, since November 2000 State Secretary of the Security Council, presidential aide for national security. Played key role in Lukashenka's electoral campaign, afterwards appointed Chief of the presidential administration replacing Mikhail Myasnikovich. Latypaw's previous post of Secretary of the Security Council filled by Henadz Nyavyhlas, former Deputy Chairman of the State Committee for Border Forces and Chairman of the Presidential Security Service.

Levanewski, Valery

Born in 1963 in Horadnya. Automobile mechanic, electrician and engineer. Currently, private entrepreneur. Formerly, member of the UCP political council and Chairman of the party's Horadnya regional branch. Expelled from UCP in 2000. Levanewski is the leader of an unregistered Belarusian trade union of entrepreneurs. Intended to run for president in 2001, but withdrew during the signature collection phase. Campaign staff established a web site dedicated to Belarusian politics (http://newbelarus.by.ru). Web site http://www.levonevski.net.

Linh, Syarhey

Born on May 7, 1937 in Minsk. Agronomist. Minister of Economy until Belarus declared independence. Vice Prime Minister in 1991–96. Appointed Prime Minister on November 18, 1996, replacing Mikhail Chyhir. Ling retired as Prime Minister on February 18, 2000. On August 11, 2000 appointed permanent representative of Belarus to the UN.

Lukashenka, Alyaksandar

Born on August 20, 1954 in the settlement of Kopys, Vorsha District. Mother was not married, took last name of maternal grandfather. History and social science education, later economist of agro-industrial production. Director of the «Haradzets» sovkhoz in the Shklow district, Mahilyow region when Belarus declared independence. Deputy to the 12th Supreme Soviet, Chairman of the Anti-corruption Committee (April 1993 – July 1994). Won first (1994) and second (2001) presidential elections. According to official information, received 75% of votes in 2001 election. Official web site http://www.president.gov.by (in Russian and English). The following websites contain a significant amount of information about him: http://www.compromat.ru/main/lukashenko/hist1.htm, http://www.terra.es/personal2/monolith/belarus.htm, http://www.angelfire.com/ok4/incognito/, http://www.dereh.com/, http://www.stopluka.org/, http://www.lukaisill.f2s.com/, http://www.lukashenko.com/, http://www.geocities.com/aglukashenko/, http://tertiusstatus.narod.ru/1/pg1.htm, http://meltingpot.fortunecity.com/kings/1092/luka.htm, http://members.nbci.com/BelCentrum/cartoon/index.htm, http://czavo.org/barbie/, http://alexluka.chat.ru/. The entourage of Alyaksandar Lukashenka is the focus of the following site: http://meltingpot.fortunecity.com/kings/1092/.

Lyabedzka, Anatol

Born on June 27, 1961 in the village of Tryles, Stowptsy District. State farm tractor operator. History graduate (1985). Deputy to the 12th and 13th Supreme Soviets. Campaigned for Lukashenka in 1994 but soon after withdrew support. Joined the United Civic Party, elected Deputy Chairman and later party Chairman on April 15, 2000. Confidant of Uladzimir Hancharyk during the presidential election campaign in 2001.

Lyavonaw, Vasil

Born on April 16, 1938 in the village of Dubeyets, Kastsyukovichy District. Advanced degree in Agricultural Education. In 1983–1990,

First Secretary of the Mahilyow regional CPB committee. After declaration of independence, appointed trade representative to Germany. Deputy to the 12th Supreme Soviet. Minister of Agriculture and Food in Lukashenka's government. On November 11, 1997 arrested on charges of financial dealings and abuse of office. Sentenced to four years imprisonment on January 14, 2000. Amnestied on October 5, 2000. Director of the organising committee of the «For New Belarus» movement. Director of Uladzimir Hancharyk's campaign headquarters.

Malafeyew, Anatol

Born on May 14, 1933 in Homel. Economist. Last leader of the Communist Party of Belarus (1990–91). Member of the 13th Supreme Soviet, Deputy Chairman of the Economic Policy and Reforms Committee. After 1996 constitutional coup, Chairman of the House of Representatives of the 1st National Assembly. Now he is a member of the House of Representatives.

Maltsaw, Leanid

Born on August 29, 1949 in the village of Vyatsenewka, Slonim District. Military officer. Student at the Military Headquarters Academy in Moscow when Belarus declared independence. In 1995–96, Minister of Defence. Dismissed for public drunkenness. Re-appointed Minister of Defence on March 28, 2001.

Malumaw, Yury

Born on January 26, 1957. Construction engineer, lawyer. Deputy to the 12th and 13th Supreme Soviets. Campaigned for Lukashenka in 1994. Accused of illegal real estate dealings and forced out of national politics. Councellor of the ambassador of Belarus to Russia.

Marynich, Mikhail

Born on January 13, 1940 in Staryya Hakowchytsy, Petrykaw District. Construction engineer, English language translator. Deputy

to the 12th Supreme Soviet. Ambassador to Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia. Later Minister of Foreign Economic Relations. Since 1999, Belarusian ambassador to Latvia, Estonia, and Finland. Intended to run for president in 2001, but failed to collect the required number of signatures. Confidant of Uladzimir Hancharyk. Some sources claim the Security Council played a role in Marynich dropping out of the presidential race. Official web site http://www.marinich.org.

Masherava, Natalya

Born in 1945. Daughter of Piotr Masheraw, former CPB leader who died in an automobile accident on October 4, 1980. Philologist. Candidate for the 13th Supreme Soviet but lost to communist leader Vasil Novikaw. In autumn 2000, defeated Mikhail Chyhir in election to the House of Representatives. Abandoned her presidential election campaign during the signature collection phase. Some sources claim the Security Council played a role in Masherava dropping out of the presidential race. Web site: http://www.masherova.com.

Matskevich, Uladzimir

Born on March 1, 1947 in the settlement of Maryna Horka, Pukhavichy District. Technologist. KGB high officer when Belarus declared independence. Chairman of KGB since December 20, 1995. Dismissed on November 27, 2000. Currently, Belarusian ambassador to Yugoslavia.

Myasnikowich, Mikhail

Born on May 6, 1950 in the village of Novy Snow, Nyasvizh District. Engineer. First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers when Belarus declared independence. After Lukashenka came to power, appointed Deputy Prime Minister. On October 3, 1995 chaired presidential administration. Dismissed immediately after 2001 presidential election; appointed Lukashenka's aide for special commissions, later Academy of Sciences President.

Navasyad, Uladzimir

Born on April 12, 1968 in Kiev, Ukraine. History education. Member of the 13th Supreme Soviet, member of the State Construction and Self-government Committee. Until 2000 member of the UCP political council. In 1995–97 chaired UCP branch in the city of Mahilyow. In November 1996 withdrew his signature from MPs appeal to the constitutional court concerning Lukashenka's impeachment. In 2000 elected member of the House of Representatives.

Navumaw, Uladzimir

Born in 1956 in Smolensk, Russia. Officer in the Ministry of Interior. Commanded the «Almaz» (Diamond) special squad of the Ministry of Interior when Belarus became independent. Appointed head of presidential security service on January 20, 1999. Minister of Interior since September 25, 2000.

Nistsyuk, Uladzimir

Born in 1950 in Bogorodsk, Russia. Graduated from the Novosibirsk Senior Military and Political General College in 1972. Campaigned for Lukashenka in 1994, Press Secretary. After Lukashenka's election, appointed Director of Control Department of the executive branch. Deputy to the 13th Supreme Soviet. In 1996 opposed Lukashenka. Secretary of the Central Committee of the Belarusian Social Democratic Party «Popular Hramada.» Confidant of Uladzimir Hancharyk during the presidential campaign in 2001.

Novikaw, Vasil

Born on February 21, 1946 in the village of Lamachyna, Vorsha District. Philosopher. Mid-level communist functionary during Soviet era. Ran for president in 1994, came in last. Elected to the 13th Supreme Soviet, defeating Natalya Masherava. Becoming its First Vice-Chairman in 1996, opposed Lukashenka. In 1998, appointed advisor to the Belarusian embassy in Moldova. Retired in 2001. For a short period, Central Committee Secretary of the Belarusian Party of Communists.

Palevikova, Valyantsina

Born in 1950 in Lyuban. Engineer. Since 1992, activist of the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus. Chairwoman of the Belarusian party of women «Nadzeya.» Campaigned for Uladzimir Hancharyk in 2001. A biography of Valyantsina Palevikova can be found at http://valentina.virtualave.net/personal/cv.htm; see also http://www.polevikov.com/family/Valentina/ for other interesting information.

Papow, Vadzim

Born in 1940 in Demidovo, Russia. Graduated from the Belarusian Institute for the Mechanisation of Agriculture in 1971 and from the Minsk Senior Party School in 1984. First Secretary of the Mahilyow regional CPB committee when Belarus declared independence. In 1999–2000, First Deputy Minister, later Minister of Agriculture and Food. On November 21, 2000 elected Chairman of the House of Representatives of the 2nd National Assembly.

Pashkevich, Ivan

Born on May 11, 1955 in the village of Berazhnoye, Stolin District. Journalist. Supporter of Lukashenka in 1996. In 1997 appointed Deputy Chief of the presidential administration. Member of the 13th Supreme Soviet. Until 1996 member of the Social Democratic Party of Belarus; expelled for collaboration with the regime. In 2000 elected to the House of Representatives. Campaigned for Marynich in 2001.

Paznyak, Zyanon

Born on April 24, 1944 in the settlement of Subotniki, Iwe District. Doctor of Arts. From the late 1980s to mid-1990s, leader of the Belarusian national liberation movement. Deputy to the 12th Supreme Soviet. Chairman of BPF «Adradzhenne» (since 1989) and the Party BPF (since 1993). Ran for president in 1994, came in third. Emigrated from Belarus in 1996 due to a threat of arrest. Leader of the Conservative Christian Party BPF.

Posakhaw, Syarhey

Born on November 29, 1944 in Irkutsk, Russia. Career military officer. Joined Lukashenka's electoral campaign in 1994. Presidential aide for political issues and Belarusian representative to CIS institutions in 1994–2001.

Prakapovich, Piotr

Born on November 3, 1942 in Rowna, Pruzhany District. Construction engineer. Deputy to of the 12th Supreme Soviet. Deputy Chief of the presidential administration, First Deputy Prime Minister. Since 1998 President of the National Bank.

Sannikaw, Andrey

Born in 1954 in Minsk. Translator. Employed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when Belarus declared independence. Deputy Foreign Minister in 1995–1996. Retired in November 1996 protesting against constitutional coup. Currently, Co-ordinator of International Relations for the non-governmental initiative «Charter-97.»

Sasnow, Alyaksandar

Born on August 14, 1947 in Homel. Doctor of Economics. Member of the 12th Supreme Soviet (BPF faction). From 1994 to 1996 Minister of Labour in Chyhir's government. Member of the United Civic Party. Currently, Expert and Deputy Director of the Independent Institute of Socio-Economic and Political Studies (http://www.iiseps.by).

Sevyarynets, Pavel

Born on December 30, 1976 in Vorsha. Geographer. In 1996 joined BPF «Adradzhenne». Since February 1997 Chairman of the youth faction of BPF in Minsk. Co-chairman (1997), Chairman (1999) of the Young Front — BPF youth wing (http://mfront.hypermart.net/). Deputy Chairman of BPF. In 1998 spent two months in prison on a politically motivated accusation.

Sharetski, Syamyon

Born on September 23, 1936 in the village of Lawryshava, Navahradak District. Professor of Agriculture. Director of the «Red Flag» collective farm in the Valozhyn district when Belarus declared independence. In 1993 appointed aide to Prime Minister Kebich. He founded and led the Agrarian Party of Belarus. Deputy to the 13th Supreme Soviet, Speaker since January 1996. Moved to Vilnius, Lithuania in July 1999. Currently, resides in US as a political emigré. A biography of Syamyon Sharetski can be found at http://www.belarus.net/parliame/sharetsk.htm.

Shchukin, Valery

Born on March 22, 1942, in Vladivostok, Russia. Maritime mechanical engineer. Pipeline crane operator when Belarus declared independence. Deputy to the 13th Supreme Soviet, Secretary of the National Security, Defence, and Crime Committee. PCB member until 1998. In 2001 spent three months in prison for anti-presidential activity. A biography of Valery Shchukin can be found at http://www.belarus.net/parliame/schukin/index.htm.

Sheyman, Viktar

Born on May 26, 1958, in the Horadnya Region. Career military officer. Major and commander of the headquarters of the Berastse Paratroopers' Brigade when Belarus declared independence. Deputy to the 12th Supreme Soviet. Supported Lukashenka during the 1994 elections. After the election, served as Presidential Aide for Defence and Security Issues as well as State Secretary of the Security Council. On November 27, 2000, dismissed from the post of State Secretary and appointed Prosecutor General.

Shlyndzikaw, Vasil

Born in 1947 in the Homel Region. Chairman of the Civic Party of Belarus and Deputy Chairman of the National Committee of the United Civic Party after the merger. Deputy to the 13th Supreme Soviet (Chairman of the Economic Policy and Reforms Committee).

Shushkevich, Stanislaw

Born in Minsk on December 15, 1934. Professor of Physics, Vice-Rector of Belarusian State University in 1990. Taught Lee Harvey Oswald Russian in 1960–61 while working as Chief Engineer at the Minsk Radio Factory. Member of the 12th and 13th Supreme Soviets, Vice Speaker and (since autumn 1991) Speaker of the Supreme Soviet (1991–94). Placed fourth in the 1994 presidential election. Chairman of the Belarusian Social Democratic Hramada. A biography of Stanislaw Shushkevich can be found at http://www.belarus.net/parliame/ shushkev/shushkev.htm.

Shydlowski, Alyaksey

Born in 1979 in Stowptsy. Studied at the Faculty of Journalism of Belarusian State University. Arrested on August 25, 1997 for writing anti-presidential graffiti. Spent one and a half years in prison. Currently, activist of the opposition youth movement «Zubr.»

Sinitsyn, Leanid

Born on July 28, 1954 in Polatsk. Construction engineer. In 1987, Instructor at the Mahilyow regional CPB Committee. Member of the 12th Supreme Soviet. Chief of Lukashenka's electoral headquarters in 1994. After election, Chief of the presidential administration from July 1994 to October 1995. From October 1995 to June 6, 1996, Deputy Prime Minister. Retired and became Deputy General Director of the Federal Financial and Industrial Group (Russia) and advisor to the Russian banks «InterTEKbank» and Bank of High Technology. Ran for president in 2001, failed to collect required number of signatures. Some sources claim the Security Council played a role in Sinitsyn dropping out of the presidential race. Web site: http://www.sinitsyn.com.

Sivakow, Yuriy

Born on August 5, 1946 on Sakhalin, Russia. Career military officer. After Lukashenka's election in 1994 appointed head of the Rapid Reaction Department of the State Secretariat of the Security Council.

On December 30, 1996 appointed Deputy Minister of Interior and Commander of Interior Forces. On February 9, 1999 appointed Interior Minister, retired soon after. Vice-Chief of the presidential administration during the 2001 presidential election campaign; dismissed immediately following the election.

Siwchyk , Vyachaslaw

Born on December 18, 1962, in Minsk. Geographer. Geologist for «Belarusgealogiya» when Belarus declared independence. In 1995–1998, Secretary-in-Charge, later Secretary of BPF Board, Chief of BPF Soym Commission on Workers' Movement. In 1996, imprisoned for participating in the «Chernobyl Path '96» march. Deputy Chairman of BPF «Adradzhenne» and the Party BPF in 1999–2001.

Staravoytaw, Vasil

Born on June 13, 1924 in the village of Barok, Byalynichy District. Chairman of the «Rassvet» collective farm from 1968 to November 11, 1997 when he was arrested on the charge of large-scale criminal theft. Spent several years in prison. Currently, opposed to the Lukashenka regime.

Statkevich, Mikalay

Born on August 12, 1956 in the village of Lyadno, Slutsk District. Trained as military radio-engineer. Professor at the Minsk Senior Anti-aircraft Missile Engineering Higher College when Belarus declared independence. In March 1991, joined the Belarusian Social Democratic Hramada. After the party merged with the Party of Popular Accord, elected Chairman of the Central Committee of the new party (the Belarusian Social Democratic Party «Popular Hramada»). In 1998 elected Chairman of the Belarusian Social Democratic Party, re-elected in 2000.

Syanko, Uladzimir

Born on August 5, 1946 in the village of Vishkavichy, Chashniki District. Professional diplomat. 1991–92, Deputy Minister of Foreign

Affairs, 1992–94 Belarusian ambassador to Poland, later to Great Britain. 1994–97, Foreign Minister. Since 1997, Belarusian ambassador to France.

Tarazevich, Heorhi

Born on July 17, 1937 in the village of Slabada, Myadzel District. Engineer. First Secretary of the Minsk city CPB Committee since 1983. Chairman of the Presidium of the BSSR Supreme Soviet, Deputy Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet (1985–89), member of the CPB Central Committee (1974–91), candidate for the CPSU Central Committee. Chairman of the Geodesy Committee in the Belarusian Council of Ministers since 1991. Joined the opposition in 1995. Member of the Central Committee of the Belarusian Social Democratic Party «Popular Hramada.»

Tozik, Anatol

Born on March 13, 1949 in the Homel Region. Historian. Associated with the KGB since 1979. Employed at Minsk KGB Higher School when Belarus declared independence. First Deputy State Secretary of the Security Council. In July 2000 appointed Chairman of the State Inspection Committee.

Trusaw, Aleh

Born on August 7, 1954 in Mstsislaw. Doctor of History. Member of the 12th Supreme Soviet (Deputy Chairman of the Education, Culture, and Historical Heritage Committee). Member of the Belarusian Social Democratic Hramada since 1991, Deputy Chairman (1991), later Chairman of the BSDH Central Board (1992–95). Currently, the President of the Society of Belarusian Language.

Tsikhinya, Valery

Born on October 1, 1940 in the settlement of Kapatkevichy, Petrykaw District. Professor of Law. Academician. Central Committee Secretary of the CPB when Belarus declared independence. Member

of the 12th Supreme Soviet. Deputy chairman (1994), Chairman (1995–96) of the Constitutional Court. Dismissed during the constitutional crisis in autumn 1996.

Tsitsyankow, Ivan

Born on November 5, 1953, in the village of Kleyevichy, Kastsyukovichy District. Zootechnician. Member of the 12th Supreme Soviet (Secretary of Chernobyl Disaster-Related Affairs Committee). Supported Lukashenka during the 1994 elections. Chief of presidential affairs department since August 1994; dismissed in 1999. Employed in Russia with the company «Itera.» Critical of present Belarusian regime in several interviews published in 2001.

Tsyareshchanka, Viktar

Born on January 30, 1950, in the village of Dubrowka, Krasnapolle District. Mechanic, milling-machine operator and engineer. Earned a degree from the Economics Faculty of Homel State University. In 1992 appointed General Director of the joint venture «International Institute of Management.» Filed his candidacy for president in 1994 but failed to collect signatures. Deputy of the 13th Supreme Soviet (member of the Education, Science, and Culture Committee). Ran for president in 2001 but withdrew during the signature collection phase. Official web site: http://www.tereshchenko.by.

Vasilevich, Ryhor

Born on February 13, 1955 in Minsk. From 1972 to 1977, operator of a compressor installation at the Vavilov Plant (with a break for military service) and personnel instructor at the Kazlow plant. Graduated from Belarusian State University in 1980. Professor of Law. Member of the Constitutional Court of Belarus since its establishment. After constitutional coup in 1996 appointed Chairman of the Constitutional Court, as payment for his personal involvement in spreading the presidential draft of the constitution put forth for the referendum in November 1996.

Vaytovich, Alyaksandar

Born on January 5, 1938 in the village of Rachkevichy, Kapyl District. Graduate of Belarusian State University. From 1960 to 1992 employed at the Institute of Physics. In 1997 elected President of the National Academy of Science. On December 19, 2000 elected Chairman of the Council of the Republic Academician (upper chamber of the Lukashenka-installed Parliament).

Vaytsyankow, Mikalay

Born in 1947 in Schwerin, DDR. Mechanical engineer. Chairman of the Homel Regional Executive Committee when Belarus declared independence. In 1995 appointed Ambassador to the Czech Republic. In 1997, again Chairman of the Homel Regional Executive Committee, retired on April 17, 2001.

Vyachorka, Vintsuk

Born on July 7, 1961 in Berastse (Brest). Doctor of Philology. Taught at Minsk State Pedagogical Institute, Belarusian Liberal Arts High School. One of the founders and leaders of «Maystrownya» (Workshop) (1979–84), «Talaka» (1986–89), and the Confederation of Belarusian Youth Associations (1988–89). One of the BPF founders (member of the organising committee in 1988). Co-ordinator of Belarusian third sector. In 1995, founded and headed the non-governmental centre «Supolnasts» (Community, http://cacedu.unibel.by/cscsc/ spasylki.htm). Since 1999, Chairman of the Work Group of the Assembly of Non-governmental Organisations of Belarus (http://ngo.unibel.by, http://www.geocities.com/assmby/). Chairman of BPF «Adradzhenne» and the Party BPF.

Yanchewski, Usevalad

Born on April 22, 1976 in Barysaw. Lawyer. Former member of the Slavic Assembly «Belaya Rus.» Until 2001 chaired the pro-governmental Belarusian Patriotic Union of Youth (http://bpsm.by). Currently, member of the House of Representatives.

Yarashuk, Alyaksandar

Born on November 16, 1951, in the village of Unuchki, Kamyanets District. Agronomist. Head of the Agrarian Policy Department of the CPB Central Committee when Belarus declared independence. Since 1999, Chief of the National Committee of the Belarusian Trade Union of Agricultural Workers. Ran for president in 2001; failed to collect signatures. Confidant of Uladzimir Hancharyk. A biography of Alyaksandar Yarashuk can be found, in German, at http://www.belarusnews.de/news_de/2001/akten/985160868.shtml.

Yarmoshyn, Uladzimir

Born on October 26, 1942, in Pronsk, Russia. Mechanical engineer. Deputy Chairman of the Minsk City Executive Committee and Chairman of the Municipal Services and Energy Committee when Belarus declared independence. Since 1995 Chairman of the Minsk City Executive Committee. Prime Minister in 2000–2001.

Yarmoshyna, Lidziya

Born in Slutsk on January 29, 1953. Lawyer. Director of Legal Services of the Babruysk Town Executive Committee when Belarus declared independence. Since 1996, Chairwoman of the Central Committee for Elections and National Referendums. Demonstrates unswerving loyalty to Lukashenka at this post.

Yeryn, Leanid

Born on November 17, 1951 in Vorsha, Vitsebsk Region. Engineer, later KGB high officer. Worked for Central Board of USSR KGB in Moscow when Belarus declared independence, later Director of Moscow city and region FSB department. On October 20, 1995 appointed Deputy Chairman of Belarusian KGB. On September 25, 2000 appointed Director of Presidential Security Service. KGB Chairman since November 27, 2000.

Zakharanka, Yury

Born on January 4, 1952 in the town of Vasilevichy, Rechytsa District. Law enforcement officer (Ministry of Interior). Deputy Director of the Interregional Organised Crime Department of the USSR Ministry of Interior when Belarus declared independence. Appointed Minister of Interior when Lukashenka came to power. Dismissed on October 16, 1995 and became an ardent opponent of the regime. Elected to the UCP Political Council. Missing since May 7, 1999.

Zamyatalin, Uladzimir

Born on May 14, 1948 in Tula, Russia. Military career. Political Instructor in the Belarusian military region when Belarus declared independence. Kebich's press secretary during the 1994 presidential election campaign. In 1995 appointed Director of the Main Department of Socio-political Information of the presidential administration. Later, Deputy Chief of the presidential administration, Chairman of the State Committee for the Press and Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet. Deputy Chief of the presidential administration during the run-up to the presidential election of 2001, dismissed immediately thereafter.