

# POLITICAL SPHERE

Earth and Space

№ 8/2007

## Contents

### Discussion

Space, politics, geopolitics... Discussion at the «Political Sphere»

Discussion at the political studies journal «Political Sphere» (participants: Aliaksei Dzermant, Dzianis Melyantsou, Andrei Yahorau, Andrei Kazakevich). The discussion is dedicated to problem analysis of the political space and its connection with the geographical space, as well as geopolitics' role and its perspectives in Belarus.

Key words: political space, geographical space, geopolitics of Belarus, geopolitics.

### Crisis space

*Tatsiana Kasperski.* Chernobyl: collective ideas and life style

The article examines a phenomenon of the Belarusians' collective ideas concerning the Chernobyl catastrophe. The Chernobyl's discourse can be found everywhere, however it is eminently vacuous, bearing uncertainty and representing some empty form. Its content is superseded and located in time and space - in the past where the tragic experience loses its palpable connections with the reality or in space locations which are «not here», but «somewhere else» (in Homel Region, evacuation zones, etc.) The catastrophe is perceived as an uncontrollable aggression, invisible enemy, but it does not turn the Belarusian society into a whole resisting this threat. The views about Chernobyl represent fear of the social and political order destruction, which is actively used by the authorities in proving and legitimating their control over society.

Key words: Chernobyl, Chernobyl Atomic Power Station catastrophe, collective views, collective views of Belarus, collective memory, traumatic experience supersession, authorities' discourse, legitimation practices.

### Political elites

*Irmina Matanite.* Old political elite in post-Communist parliaments (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland)

The article studies the political elites' transformation in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, based on analysis of parliamentary corps of 1990-2004, and examines representation dynamics of ex-Communists, ex-dissidents and previously politically inactive parliamentarians, as well as these groups' political and sociodemographic features. The analytical results demonstrate the presence of a significant amount of ex-Communists in democratic parliaments. The general tendency is a representation decrease of ex-Communists and dissidents, while the number of previously politically non-engaged members grows considerably. The conclusion is that the political elites' configuration depends on peculiarities of the Soviet nomenklatura and Communist Party's genesis in the Baltic States and Poland. The author impugns the «conspiracy theory» according to which former public figures of the Communist regime play their negative (seditious) role in democratic conditions.

Key words: transitology, post-Communism, post-Communist countries, political elite, political elites of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, parliamentary elite, ex-Communists.

*Viktar Charnou.* Revolution and order

The article analyzes contemporary approaches to understanding revolutionary changes and examines the correlation between revolution and political order. Social revolutions are a spontaneous result of a rather rare set of many circumstances. The enactment of a legitimate and effective civil order represents the basic criterion of a successful revolution. In case of a democratic revolution, the elites' normative consensus provides the best opportunities of minimizing violence and

strengthening new institutions.

Key words: social revolution, political order, political institutionalization, democratic revolution, democratic order.

## Geographic space

*Todd Razor. Space concept of the frontier area: in search of Belarus on civilization maps by Samuel Huntington and Aleksandr Dugin*

The article is dedicated to critical analysis of «fashionable» in Russia and the USA civilization theory of international relations, in terms of works by Samuel Huntington and Aleksandr Dugin. In order to consider the way the theorists use the civilization approach, the case of Belarus and its position on the civilization maps modelled by them, is taken. Development of the geopolitical theory during the periods of «prior to» and «after» the Cold War is examined. Belarus is shown as an example of the method used by geopoliticians for localization and description of contact zones. The fundamental ideas of the hypotheses by S. Huntington and A. Dugin are considered. The author analyses theoretical consequences of these hypotheses and points out perspective directions of further researches.

Key words: civilization turn, civilization theory, civilization map, Cold War, geopolitics, contact zone.

*Dmitriy Buryj. Space of Europe in the ideas of the «new rights»*

The article analyzes the ideas of the major representatives of the right-wing radicals during the period after the World War II concerning Europe and European space. The basic attention is given to consideration of concepts by J. Evola, A. de Benoist, G. Fauriol which concern the political organization of Europe and its geopolitical future. The basic distinctions in understanding Europe by the extremely right ideologists are determined.

Key words: European «new rights», right radicalism, concept of Europe, J. Evola, A. de Benoist, G. Fauriol, European integration.

## Political space

*Siarhei Liubimau. The mire, history and space of Belarus*

The cultural and political situation in Belarus from the position of the «critical social theory of space» is reviewed in this article. The concepts of the absolute space and collecting space are analyzed. The fact of melioration of moors and its influence on landscape changes, as well as modernization of Belarus, are studied. A special attention is given to the topic of fens in the cultural domain of contemporary Belarus and texts by some authors (Y. Shautsou, V. Akudovich, P. Vasiuchenka, etc.)

Key words: critical social theory of space, absolute space, collecting space, melioration, melioration in Belarus, moor, moor as a cultural factor, landscape.

*Aleksei Kryvalap. Building a new space. Belarusian experience in visual representation of the Independence Day*

The given article must be considered as an attempt of analysis of television representations in the paradigm of visual and cultural researches. The key questions in the present context are: what are the ways of visualizing independence? How does independence look like? What is the display of troops carried out for? Still, before we start looking for answers to these questions, we need to describe the audio-visual material we have to work with, and to provide the necessary theoretical grounds.

Key words: representation, identity, Independence Day, visual culture, mass media, television, heterotopy.

*David Maychin, Osama Suleiman. Arab and American military computer games: global technologies and discourse*

This research compares two computer games, American and Arab ones, which reflect the conflict in Lebanon, provides the historical background of what the USA and Hezbollah do in the region, and draws attention to the representation of the social factors, determinations and actions in both games. The question is how the games correlate to the real events in the world which they re-contextualize, how they form these events in terms of a military discourse of the «special

operations» which originates in the USA. The research shows that the games' contents reflect different political interests.

Key words: computer games, multimodality, new media, terrorism, Hezbollah, Lebanon.

## History of consciousness

*Dzianis Lipski. «We don't abjure the past...», Reviewed issue: *Shield and Sword of Motherland*, edited by V. I. Dementei. — Minsk, 2006 — 340 pages*

A review of the book published by the Belarusian KGB's printing house *Shield and Sword of Motherland* is dedicated to the history of the Belarusian secret services from the times of the Principality of Polotsk till the present days. The review says that the Belarusian KGB has partially adopted the nation-centred version of the ancient history of Belarus, but has not critically revised the «Great Terror» and ignores the contemporary political realities.

Key words: KGB, NKVD, OGPU, history of Belarusian secret services, history of Belarus, ideology.

## Reviews

*Yury Aleksandrenkav. Seven years of Revival... The fragments of history*

The review analyzes the book of the well-known Belarusian politician of the early 1990's Siarhei Navumchyk. The text considers Navumchyk's interpretation of the political events in 1988-1995, including the work of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR (then — the Republic of Belarus) of the 12th convocation and the evolution of the Belarusian People's Front, the major opposition force in Belarus. Also, the review discusses Siarhei Navumchyk's attitude towards cultural public figures and politics and determines their role in the political processes in 1988-1995.

Key words: BPF, political history of Belarus, Supreme Soviet of 12th convocation, Parliament of Republic of Belarus, political opposition, Siarhei Navumchyk.

*Andrei Yahorau. Political history...*

The given text is a review of the issue *The Political History of Independent Belarus*, edited by V. Bulhakau, Printing House of Vilnius Institute of Belarusian Studies. Stylistic lack of uniformity, absence of logical integrity and chronological incoherence allow to define this book as a compilation. The evolution of the Belarusian state and its political regime is analyzed by various authors. The review draws attention to the journalistic genre of most texts, which authors represent nothing but their own speculative outlooks and conclusions. It can be a good factual reference book about the political history of contemporary Belarus, but it has neither strict scientific grounds, nor disciplinary demureness.

Key words: review, political history, newest history of Belarus, evolution of Belarusian political regime, evolution of Belarusian opposition, elections.