

Ethnic Groups, History, and Memory in Grodno

As Arkadil Smolich wrote about Grodno in the *Geography of Belarus* (1919): 'It is one of the best and most interesting cities of Belarus, a little isle of an old western civilization which lies near the Nieman forests.'¹ The settlement on the bank of Nieman appeared at the end of the tenth to the beginning of the eleventh centuries. It is mentioned for the first time in the Ipatiev chronicle on 11 or 14 August 1127. Grodno (earlier Goroden, Gorodnia) was the center of Gorodnia Duchy till 1240 and was a vassal of the Grand Duke of Kiev. From then until 1795 (the third Partition of Poland) Grodno was a central district and a residence of the Grand Duke of Lithuania. It was considered one of the most important cities of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. After the Union of Lublin in 1596 it became a town of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. From 1795 to 1917 Grodno was the center of district and from 1802 of a province in the Russian Empire, where the provincial administration was concentrated.

Grodno survived the First World War and German occupation. **In 1917—19** it was part of the Belarusian National Republic and the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic (BSSR). From 21-28 April 1920 there were Polish armies in Grodno. Then Soviet armies took over for five months. The Polish army returned on 25 September 1920 and after the Treaty of Riga Grodno remained part of the Polish Second Republic as a regional town of the Bialystok region. On 20 September 1939, following the Soviet-Nazi invasion of Poland, Grodno became a part of the BSSR. It was under German occupation from June 1941 to July 1944. It was re-occupied by the Soviets in 1944 and from 20 September 1944 Grodno was a regional city.

In 1991 Grodno became the center of Grodno area and region of Republic of Belarus. The city is an industrial, trading, scientific and cultural center. The territory of the city is about 5,746 hectares; it has 420 streets, squares, and lanes, over 7,000 houses in which live 301,622 people (last census of 1999).

The city of Grodno has a very favorable geopolitical position: it is situated between the West and the East, between Poland and Lithuania, a member of the European Union, and Russia. Moreover Grodno region situates on ethno cultural border zone. Here are borders between the states (Belarus, Poland, and Lithuania), the international unions (the CIS, EU), peoples (Belarusians, Poles, and Lithuanians), religions (Orthodoxy and Catholicism), and civilizations. This border zone has influenced on consciousness of the population of Grodno.

¹ Arkady Smolich, *Heohrafiia Belarusi* (Minsk, 1993), p. 260.

Grodno citizens have a local-regional identity). The town is multilingual and multiethnic.

It is necessary to pay attention that this is a multiethnic city. Here live representatives of almost 70 nationalities. The most significant are shown in the table 1.

Nationalities	1979		1989		1999	
	Number	percent	Number	percent	Number	percent
Total Population	194,314	100	269,757	100	301,622	100
Belarusians	103,101	53.0	143,073	53.0	169,100	56.1
Poles	37,823	15.5	57,658	21.4	66,800	22.1
Russians	42,772	22.0	55,148	20.5	53,600	17.8
Ukrainians	7,201	3.7	9,424	3.5	8,300	2.7
Jews	1,745	0.9	1,595	0.6	600	0.2
Tatars	326	0.2	635	0.2	400	0.1
Lithuanians	231	0.1	347	0.1	300	0.1
Others	1,115	0.6	1,877	0.7	1900	0.9

* [12, p.144; p. 177]

As we see, the ethnic structure of Grodno has changed little in the past 20 years. As well as earlier, in 1999 the largest number were Belarusians, then the Poles. Further on there are Russians, Ukrainians and smaller ethnic groups: Jews, Tatars, Lithuanians. Every ethnus mentioned here can be considered a national minority in relation to Belarusians.

The religious situation in Grodno is also specific. Eight orthodox parishes and Grodno Saint-Rozhdestvabogoroditski monastery belong to Grodno diocese of Orthodox Church of Belarus (the territory of a diocese coincides with the Grodno area). Nine Catholic parishes belong to Grodno diocese of the Roman Catholic Church. There are also Catholic religious communities (e.g., Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth) and the Catholic charitable society Caritas.² In 2004 in Grodno there were 23 major buildings; there were 25 Sunday schools of ten different religious faiths where 5,403 persons were taught.³

Grodno area is distinguished from other areas of Belarus by their higher level of religiosity of its population. A parity between Catholic and Orthodox Church that does not exclude struggle for spheres of influence. The distribution

- Davedka Saveta pa spravakh religii i natsyional'nastsia u ablasnoha vykanauchaha kamiteta „Relihifnyia arhanizatsyi, iakia dzeimichajuts' na terytoryi h. Hrodna na 16.12.2004 h.“³
Davedka 'O religioznoi situacii v gorode Grodno v 2004 g.'

of non-conventional faiths is constrained by the powerful positions of the two faiths.

Language is connected with national identification. Table 2 shows how the population of Grodno was distributed by nationality and the mother tongue in 1989.

Table 2. Population by nationality and mother tongue in Grodno, 1989

Group	Total	Number speaking their own mother tongue	Number speaking a different mother tongue			Percent speaking their own mother tongue
			Russian	Belarusian	Other	
Total	269,757	146,895	104,121	18,647	94	54.5
Belarusians	143,073	82,492	60,577	n/a	4	57.7
Poles	57,658	5,934	34,219	17,475	30	10.3
Russians	55,148	54,382	n/a	727	39	98.6
Ukrainians	9,424	2,776	6,302	343	3	29.5
Lithuanians	347	148	177	22	0	42.7
Jews	1,595	126	1,446	19	4	7.9
Tatars	635	270	337	27	1	42.5
Others	1,877	767	1,063	34	13	40.9

* [12, p. 169].

As we see, almost all Russians considered Russian their native language. It is different for Belarusians. Almost half of Belarusian Grodno citizens did not consider Belarusian language as native. Among Jews and Poles only 7.9 and 10.3 percent of them respectively consider language of their nationality their native language.

Unfortunately you will not hear Belarusian language in streets, in buses or in public institutions. It mainly sounds in the academic environment, among representatives of intelligentsia and the democratic youth. The step from passive knowledge of the Belarusian language to its multilateral functional usage has not been made. The good beginning of 1990s had no continuation in connection with the introduction of state bilingualism (Belarusian and Russian) after a referendum of 1995. In essence it appeared that the language of Russian minority has an advantage over Belarusian. The Belarusian language has not passed from the internal place (knowledge) to the external (use). The task is in creation a language environment and overcoming Belarusian 'language conformism.' The problem can be solved because the attitude of the majority to

Belarusians who speak Belarusian language is positive, they are considered well-bred people and patriots.

Research has shown that in all spheres of life the Russian language dominates: conversations in street, in shops, transport; in work and in contacts with colleagues; in relations with friends; at home and in family.

The process of revival began among all ethnic groups after Belarus became independent in 1991. Their cultural and religious life became more active - schools have been opened, newspapers and magazines, where the problems of national interests began to be discussed appeared (and also state ones). All this was the answer to leveling and standardization of a national life in soviet time, when there was a historical generality 'Soviet people.'

Belarusians

Young people were the first to promote the revival of Belarusian statehood, language, and the protection of historical and cultural monuments and the natural environment. The Pohodnia historical and cultural club was founded in Grodno in 1986 led by the well-known Belarus historian M. A. Tkachov. Its members collected information on Belarusian history, carried out excursions to ruins of ancient castles, revived national ceremonies, Belarusian language, met interesting people: historians, writers, politicians and religious figures, museum directors, and artists.

A large celebration of the Kupala fest took place for the first time in 1988 on the bank of Nyoman, and the M. Bogdanovich organization organized celebrations of Catholic and Orthodox Christmas in the Grodno streets: people sang songs, congratulated people. Young people were the first to support believers in their struggle for returning of temples. Thanks to them the Belarusian language began to sound in temples. The youth initiated a revival of the Uniate Church in Grodno in 1992. They tried unsuccessfully to defend an old Grodno railway station from destruction. In 1988 a collection of money was organized for a monument of V. K. Kalinovski in Grodno.⁴

After reception of independence non-state organizations were legalized in Belarus. Till the referendum of 1995 they operated successfully enough and were in good relations with the government which helped them and did not put barriers. In 1996 the regional resource center Ratusha in Grodno opened with

V. Sazonau and U. Khil'manovich. 'Nedziarzhauण्या arhanizatsyi Haradzshchyny i ikh dzelnasts' u hramadzkiikh asiarodkakh.' in *Palitychnaia stseno Belarusi: Haradzshchinskia hramadzkaia rukhi i tsupol'nastsi* (Shehetsin, 2002), p. 19-31, here p. 23; Horad sviatoha Huberta: kraiaznauchy al'manakh, Vyp. 1 (Historyia Harodni XX st. u vusnykh uspaminakh) (Selny: ..Fundacja Pogranicze,' 2002). p. 79-80.

the help of the Soros Fund. After referenda in 1995 and 1996 the conditions for independent development of Belarusian ethnicity have worsened. After a re-registration in 1999 the majority of national communities, non-state associations, and organizations were forced to close. Belarusian-language independent newspapers *Pagonia* and *Birzha informacii*, the largest youth newspapers, were closed or have been ceased to print because of the lack of money.

From the middle of 1990s Belarusian culture and language began to be considered by the authorities a sign of opposition and negative attitude to existing political system. Authorities did not stimulate, and in some cases suppressed national and cultural activity.

Belarusianness began to be reduced to a folklore-ethnographic level. In repertoires of the songs, music and dance ensemble *Beliya Rosi*, chamber chorus and an orchestra, instrumental ensembles of soloists and association of soloists, the band *Grodno Kapela* there are Belarusian national songs, and compositions of ancient and modern Belarusian composers. In 2004 there were more than 200 bands of amateur performances in Grodno, 45 of them had a rank of 'national' and 'exemplary.' These included *Nyoman*, *Prialitsa*, *Vianok*, *Ranitsa*, *Gorodnitsa*, *Krinichka*, *Synthes*, and *Dudariki*. Every city holiday goes on with brass band *Gorodenskija Truby*. Annually there are festivals of guitar music.

From the period when Grodno was a part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth there remain historical and cultural monuments which can be social and cultural determinants of national development: the fragments of Duke's palace (second quarter of the twelfth century), the Lower Church (second quarter of the thirteenth century), *Prechistsenskaya Church* (second half of the twelfth century). All these pieces of art of Grodno architectural school. During the reign of Grand Duke *Witold* (r. 1401-30), Grodno became another capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Grodno duke *Witold* constructed an Old Gothic (Bottom) castle for himself in 1400 and it stood until 1580 when it was reconstructed by King *Stefan Batory*. Though it has undergone alterations, it remains an important feature of Grodno today.

This double meaning of historical and cultural monuments also influences consciousness and ethnic identification. When an independent Lithuanian reappeared, it considered itself the only successor of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania, though Belarusians and others in Grodno also identified with the '*Pogon Litewski*.' State authorities got rid of the symbol after referenda in 1995 and 1996. As such the authorities followed the example of Soviet times when Belarusians were told such myths as 'conquering of the Western Russia's land by the Lithuanian feudal lords', 'oppression of the

Belarusian peasants by the Lithuanian feudal lords.' Belarusians were willing for centuries to unite with Russian state.'

Architecture that remained since Soviet times included buildings of administration and the enterprises, residences, buildings of social and cultural applicability. When carrying out plans of town-planning, communist authorities destroyed Witold's Fara (1961), the Jewish cemetery (1963), and the railway station (1986). They reconstructed the Old Castle for the regional committee of Communist Party of Belarus in a way that robbed it of its authenticity. Monuments of that time are kept until nowadays: memorials of the classics of Marxism-Leninism, Russian military men, who have no relation to Grodno (Chapaev, Vatutin, Dovator, Kosmodemianskaia and others), monuments of people killed in the Second World War, Kurgan of Glory, obelisks and monuments in the military cemetery, and the monument '850 years of Grodno.'

Such city areas, as 'Southern' settlement, Deviatovka, Augustovo were built since 1991. Reconstruction of city centre buildings is ongoing, including Soviet square (during archeological work the bases and cellars of Radziwill castle were found there), and the Red Banner stadium (the Jewish cemetery has been disturbed again). The construction goes now under the new general plan of 2004. There were new memorials dedicated: of Witold at New and Old castles, a memorial board to insurgents of 1863 at the railway station, a monument of David Gorodenski near Borisoglebskaia church. Toponymic commission at city executive committee, successfully return ancient names to a square and seven streets.

Poles

Following the Belarusians, the Poles were the first to join the process of revival. A Polish cultural and educational society named A. Mickiewicz appeared in August 1988 in Grodno. The Grodno department of the public association 'The Union of Poles in Belarus' (UPB) operates now.

Significant attention is paid to studying the Polish language. The motives for studying it are different: from a desire to know the national culture up to prospects of emigration. In modern situation the Polish language is not just a language of a national minority, it is a language which opens opportunities to study in Polish higher educational institutions, to work in Poland and abroad.

During the 1991-92 educational year at schools no. 3 and no. 23 in Grodno one Polish language class began to work. A branch of Polish philology at philological faculty in Grodno university was organized (by 2000 249 people had been taught there). In 1992 the Polish lyceum of the Union of Poles in Belarus started to work. On 21 September 1996 the first Polish school in Belarus was opened with support of Poles in Grodno. The preschool and kindergarten

teachers with the right to work in Polish are taught in a special faculty at Grodno musical - pedagogical college. which started in 1997. Polish language is taught in 'Macerze szkolnej,' which was organized in 1995.⁵

In 2004 in Grodno, Polish language was studied by 548 pupils at 17 schools, three grammar schools, and one lyceum. Facultative this language was studied by 441 pupils at 8 schools and 2 grammar schools; on interest studies, 316 pupils at 10 schools, grammar schools no. 4; on studies by choice, 400 pupils at 9 schools, grammar schools no. 1, lyceum no. 1; in circles, 75 pupils in a grammar school no. 2.⁶ In total there are 1,232 pupils. The Polish language was also studied in 20 children's preschools (371 children).

With development of Polish-speaking education organization of Polish youth began. A congress of Polish Scouts took place in 1997.⁷ Scout teams of Grodno area cooperate with Polish ones, go to Poland for vacations and joint events. Since 1992 a Society of Polish youth in Grodno, which unites Polish students of Grodno universities has existed. Its members get acquainted with Polish language, culture, history, religion, and traditions.⁸

Since 1990 the Union of Poles published the weekly newspaper *Głos nad Niemna* and since 1992 the quarterly *Magazyn Polski* in Grodno. Polish editors operate on regional radio and TV.

A number of actions was carried out by the Union of Poles in Belarus in 2004: celebrating traditional holidays, a national art fair, the Constitution Day on May 3, an annual children's festival of Polish songs, celebration programs for Christmas and Easter, and a concert program devoted to Polish Independence Day.⁹ Two ensembles of songs and dance perform here (Lehici and Habri), three choruses Voice above the Nieman, Gorodenskiya Sloviki and Zvonochki.¹⁰

At the Union of Poles in Belarus there is a library which in 2004 had more than 19,000 books, brochures and periodicals.¹¹ Polish scholarly organizations,

I. Kabzinska, 'Znajomosc dziedzictwa kulturowego jako jeden z warunkow zachowania tozsamosci narodowej (etnicznej),' in *Problemy natsional'nogo soznania pol'skogo naselenia na Belarusi. Materialy mezhd. nauch. Konf.* (Grodno, 2003), p. 7-20, here p. 8.

⁶ Kabzinska, p. 5.

⁷ R. Karaczun, *Odrodzona Szkoła* (Grodno, 1998), p. 11, 26, 74, 91, 93.

⁸ Kabzinska, p. 9.

V. N. Leonov, *Otchet o rezul'tatakh raboty s natsional'no-kul'turnymi ob'edineniami natsional'nykh obshchestv i regulirovaniya mezhnatsional'nykh otnoshenii v 2004 g.* (rukopis), p. 6.

Leonov, p. 2; V. Zadalia, 'Vzhyvem na zjamli adnoi (Demahrafichnyia pratsesy, natsyiana'l'nyia i relihiinyia supol'nastsi na Haradzenshchynie),' in *Palitychnyia stse'na Belarusi: Haradzenskiia hramadskiia rukhi i supol'nastsi* (Shchetsin, 2002), p. 32-7, here p. 38.

Leonov, p. 8.

the Society of Polish Historians, the Society of Polish Doctors are also active. All of them help to revive Polish ethnos, raise national consciousness, and strengthen the feeling of joint destiny and brotherly connection with Belarusian people.

On 27 August 2005 there were changes in the Union of Poles in Belarus. Chairman A. Boris who had recently replaced T. Kruchkouski, was re-elected, because the sixth congress of the Union was not recognized as not legitimate by the Ministry of Justice of Belarus. After new congress J. Luchnik, 69 years old was elected as a new chairman, new council and board were elected. Luchnik says that UPB will study and protect Polish national historical and cultural heritage and Polish language in accordance with Constitutions of Belarus and the Charter of the association. State authorities have continued actions to suppress the UPB and have seized some of its property.

There are important Polish monuments of sacred architecture as well. The first Catholic church of Grodno, the Cathedral of the Holy Mother (Witold's Fara) was constructed in city centre. The original building (first mentioned in 1389) was wooden, but in 1584-86 it was reconstructed in stone with the name Cathedral of Virgin Maria (Farny). On the night on the 28-29 November 1961 the cathedral was blown up by communist authorities. It is connected with the Polish prince, St. Casimir, who lived for a time in Grodno. After his death he was canonized and became the patron saint of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. As social and cultural monument it can promote self-identification of Poles as well as for Lithuanians. Each November they come to the former location of cathedral on the anniversary of its destruction and light candles near a wooden cross.

Where Grodno's regional drama theatre now stands, there once stood a church and a convent of Bernadine sisters (built 1621). Now only the church and a monastery of Bernadine monks remains (built seventeenth-eighteenth century) which stands on the opposite side. The wedding of Eliza Pawlowska (1841-1910), the future Polish classic writer, with Piotr Orzeszko on 21 January 1858 took place here.

The church and monastery of Jesuits of St. Francis Xavier is a fine historical and cultural monument of the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries. It is possible to see main altar inside, the work of local carvers under J. Shmidt's direction, a miraculous icon of Holy Mother of Students, a monument to the Grodno school of 1765-1780. There is also a fresco on the life of St. Francis Xavier, and memorial plaques devoted to professor of physics Z. F. Wroblewski and the hero of the struggle for independence of Poland, Tadeusz Kosciuszko. Near the cathedral there is a Jesuits' drugstore. The monuments mentioned here are factors that influence the consciousness of Poles.

Approximately in the middle of K. Marx Street there stands the former church of the Brigidians, constructed in 1634-1642, in a courtyard there is a wooden building of this period in which the first Brigidian monks who arrived in Grodno, lived. In the central street of Grodno. Soviet street, (former Vilenskaia), there remains a Dominican monastery (built in the eighteenth century). On the left bank of Nieman in the 1630s there was a Franciscan church and monastery (the current structure was built in 1744). On Podolnaia street there remains a monastery of Carmelites dating from the seventeenth century.

From the Polish period of Grodno the Royal palace (built in the eighteenth century) remains, though reconstructed in the Soviet times. After the work of A. Tizengauz during last years of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth there remains a complex of buildings on the square of his name (area Gorodnitsa): the house of the vice-administrator, a conservatory, theatre (originally horse arena), the house of forestry administration. In the depth of Old Park you can see a building of medical school. Nearby on street there is Eliza Orzeszka's small house, in which she lived from 1894 until 1910. Nearby there is a monument to this Polish writer (1929). In borders of the city there lie former royal manors Stanislawowo and Augustowo.

In Grodno during Polish times a tourist guide of J. J. Jadcowski was published describing not only the historical and cultural monuments of Grodno, but also suburbs and nearby territories. It demonstrates the achievement of Polish culture and Grodno's place as a Polish city.

Russians

A branch of the public association Russian Society exists in Grodno. In 2000 it consisted of 70 persons. It brings books issued in the Russian Federation to Grodno. For example, 7,800 books were brought in 2004 and given to regional scientific Karski library, the Teacher's club, the pedagogical centre of education of city executive committee, and grammar schools no. 1 and no. 11. Annually teachers of Russian language and literature receive training in the Russian Federation. Grodno citizens participate in an essay competition which is organized by the Russian newspaper. About twenty children can have a rest in a children's camp for the countries of CIS, Baltic States, and Pskov area. High-school students of the city participate in Olympiad on Russian language and literature among pupils from CIS countries. Competition of regional specialists 'Grodno of the 60th' is annually organized. Russian society has its own ensemble: Harmony.¹²

¹² L. Novitskaia, 'Zelenaia linia' ot 'Russkogo obshchestva,' *Hrodzenskaia praiida*, 3 June 2004, p. 4.

Do not think that 'Russian society' has no problems. On a round table of representatives of public associations of Grodno on 19 May 2005 the head of the society L. Popov spoke about problems with the contents of their office, he claimed, that they are a brake for local authorities.

Since 1995 there exists a producing center 'Russian style' which releases audiotapes, helps to finance Grodno drama theatre. 100th anniversary of S. Esenin's birthday has been prepared there. They invite ensembles of national art to Grodno. This center also takes part in festivals of national cultures.¹³ There is in Grodno a branch of the Belarusian public association 'Russia,' which recently was founded and the union of Belarus and the Russian Federation.

A number of orthodox churches remained in Grodno. The oldest church is Borisoglebskaia Church. It was built in a second half of the twelfth century after the lower church in the Old Castle (1184) was ruined in a storm. It was built by Peter-Mioloneg's artisans from Turov, Polotsk manufacturers of plinfa (a special brick), as well as by local artisans and workers. The Grodno Prechistenskaia Church of the twelfth century, formerly a monument of Grodno architecture, has not remained.

In David Gorodenskii- Street there is a church of the Immaculate Conception (built in the eighteenth century) and a former building of a Basilian Orthodox monastery. At the corner of V. Lenina and E. Ozhska streets is Pokrovskaia Church consecrated in 1907. There are two memorial boards inside, devoted to officers and enlisted men of the 26th brigade and Grodno garrison, killed in the Russo-Japanese war, and also a memorial plate to Grodno soldiers who fought in Afghanistan. In the Pobeda Street there is the Vladimir church of 1896.

From the Russian period of Grodno history there remained monuments of official (public and industrial) and private buildings. The house of Grodno vice-governor Maksimovicha was constructed in 1800. From the middle of the nineteenth century there stands a house of Fuks (it is connected with Kalinovski). In the corner of Soviet Square the house of Grodno merchant Muravev stands, which was constructed in the beginning of the twentieth century. In Lenin Street there is a building of former land bank (1913), and on the opposite side - the house of doctor Talgelm (1911). All the three monuments are constructed in style 'modern.' An old building of university is a former female grammar school where the daughter of well-known Russian prime-minister A. Stolypin studied. In Dzerzhynskii Street the National House was constructed in 1904. The reconstructed Old Park looks like former Provincial Park of the second half of the nineteenth to the beginnings of the twentieth century.

Provincial Grodno of the middle of the nineteenth century is shown in N. Orda's drawings. At the end of the nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century cards with the image of the city there were published in Grodno, the photographers were Karasik, Yezeriskil, Papirnyi and others. Grodno historical-archeological museum often makes exhibitions 'Grodno on old cards.'

Ukrainians

The public association Barvinak exists since 1998 (50 people in 2000). They participate in international Ukrainian forums in Kiev forums. Through 2002 they had evening events in their office. Since 2002 meetings take place in library on F. Pestrak street. There is a choreographic group at school no. 25 whose repertoire consists of many Ukrainian dances. Here the days of the Ukrainian culture are carried out. Ukrainian embroiders participate in exhibitions.¹⁴ A masquerade 'Welcome to Sorochinskaia fair.' devoted to the 195th anniversary of N. V. Gogol's birthday took place in April, 2004. A fragment from a story 'Courtship' was staged by vocal group Mriya. In end of the evening the participants enjoyed vareniki with sour cream and real galushki.¹⁵

Lithuanians

Since 1996 Lithuanians have the public association Tevine ('Motherland,' 127 people in 2000). At their office one can study Lithuanian language, history, geography and culture. The graduates have an opportunity to study at Vilenski House of Lithuania (created for Lithuanians from the different countries of the world) and University of Vilnius. In city library no. 10 in Pestrak Street there is a collection of Lithuanian literature and periodicals. Meetings, evenings, holidays (for example, the 125-anniversary of the composer and painter M. Ciurlionis). exhibitions (for example, of national artist B. Kutskaite) take place here.¹⁶ There is a folklore ensemble Tevine. A wooden sculpture of the Great Duke of Lithuania Witold stands near the Old Castle.

Jews

The main office of this minority situates in M. Bogdanovich Street. There exist several national unions. Jewish religious community deals with subjects of religion. Since 2000 there has been a Jewish communal house: Menorah (400

¹⁴ L. Novitskaia, 'Svoi sredi svoikh,' *Hrodzenskaia praida*, 6 June 2002, p. 5.

¹⁵ Leonov, p. 10.

¹⁶ L. Novitskaia, 'Pomnim korni svoi,' in *Hrodzenskaia praida*, 6 June 2002, p. 8; Leonov, p. 11.

people). Since 1999 a welfare fund Hesed-Nohum (in 2000, 20 people) which helps elderly people (more than 460 people in 2000) operates in Grodno. The consulate of Israel supervises questions of repatriation. The members of the Grodno Jewish memorial public association Jerusha take care of architectural monuments, preserve the memory of important cultural figures who lived in Grodno, and take care of graves. The Lejb Najdus' public association of Jewish culture (more than 100 people in 2000) deals with history and culture. At two day-off schools (no. 8 and no. 10, Mihena and Menorah) Judaism, English and computers are studied. For the senior pupils and youth there works a youth club Menorah. Celebratory evenings and discussion meetings are organized. In family club evenings of rest, family holidays, birthdays, anniversaries take place two times a month. Every Friday participants of all programs come on joint meetings of Sabbath.

The program 'Happiness to you' is designed for children from birth till maturity (the girl up to 12 years, boys up to 13): they are given gifts for name-days, vitamins two times a year. The program 'Holocaust' reminds about awful events of the Second World War.

Jews have chorus 'Menorah,' youth ensemble 'Menorah,' 'Solohmones' theatre. At the office there is a rich library which had more than 1000 copies of books and periodicals in 2002. Since 1999 communal festivals of Jewish books take place in the city House of Culture. In 2002 a roundtable of historians and regional specialists on the problems of protecting historical and cultural heritage of Grodno's Jewish population took place. A collection of articles Jews of Grodno about Grodno Jewish community from the fourteenth to the twentieth century was released.¹⁷

Monuments of Jewish architecture are: the great choral synagogue (the sixteenth century, reconstruction at the turn of the nineteenth-twentieth centuries) in area of Great Trajetskaia Street, some houses in this street, house of Shereshevski on the end of Sovietskaia Street and his tobacco factory (the middle of the nineteenth century) near the Old bridge (where there was also a fine cloth factory for a long time). There is a memorial plaque to prisoners of the Grodno ghettos in the Zamkovaia Street, where the ghetto was during Nazi occupation (15,000 people). It is planned to construct a memorial sign in honor of an old Jewish cemetery which lies under the stadium opposite the Hotel Belarus. Poet Lejb Najdus was buried there. Reconstruction of a synagogue is not possible yet as only the design demands \$50,000.

¹⁷ G. Jurkovets, 'Menora: nesushchaia svet,' *Hrodzenskaia praitda*, 3 June 2004, p. 13; I. Sotnikava, 'Bibliateki: natsyianal'nym supolkam, supolki-bibliatekam.' *Hrodzenskaia praitda*, 20 krasavik 2002, p. 11.

Tatars

In 1987 Tatars of Grodno created an association Al-Kitab (43 persons in 2000). A newspaper *Bairam* in Minsk and a monthly journal *Life* which is distributed in Grodno are issued in the Belarusian language. In branch no. 2 of the city library in Belush Street there is a collection of Tatar literature (more than 100 editions) and periodicals (magazines *Tatarstan*, *Idel*, *Gayan*; newspapers *Sabantm*, *Evening Kazan*). Interesting meetings and evenings take place here (for example, devoted to Anna Ahmatova, Farid Yarulin, actor F. Tueshov, dancer R. Nuriev and others) and holiday Bairam is celebrated. There is a vocal ensemble 'Kulebiak' in Grodno. Since 1996 there is a school of Arabic language for children. Arabic students who study in Grodno educational institutions teach there.¹⁸ During already mentioned round table of representatives of national associations the head of Al-Kitab A. Krinitskii stated: 'We are offended by the state. It recollects about us only one time in two years when the authorities should carry out the festival of national cultures.'

Grodno as a Place of Memory

In his novel *1984*, George Orwell defined the role and place of historical memory very skillfully. The motto of the supervising party in the country: 'who supervises the past, supervises the future; who supervises the present, supervises the past.' The Ministry of Love created in that country was engaged in treatment of memory of those people who remembered that they should not remember (old songs, monuments of a history and culture. nature. etc.), because 'ignorance is a power!'. The Ministry of Truth had to react quickly to changes of ruling party policy and to make changes in carriers of memory: edit newspapers, books, posters, etc., because the past should correspond the present.

For something similar not to happen in our countries, sociologists calculate sources of identification of ethnicity, carriers of memory; historians investigate monuments of history and culture, study historical processes. Together we can deny such a 'treatment' of memory, and on the contrary, we shall fix correct understanding of multicultural, many-sided development.

In Grodno there is a fundamental base for this purpose, two archives: National historical archive of Belarus and Grodno state archive of the Grodno area. In the first there are memory carriers of history of the Grodno region in the end of the fifteenth century-the beginning of the twentieth century, in the other one since year 1917. Since perestroika (1989) many facts of the Grodno region's history stopped being a secret for researchers. There are documents in archives

¹⁸ L. Novitskaia, 'Shest' stoletii: riadom s belorussami,' *Hrodzenskaia prauda*, 6 June 2002, p. 9; Leonov, 9-10.

that allow writing of an objective history. Interesting materials are kept in Grodno museums; it is especially in Grodno state historical-archeological museum: finds of archeological excavations, production of Grodno enterprises of different epochs, documentary materials, etc. Valuable books of the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries, old Grodno newspapers, and manuscripts are in a department of manuscripts of the museum.

Basing on the carriers of memory mentioned above, I have written the manual *History of Grodno* (in Belarusian) for middle-school pupils. I hope that it will play its role in formation of historical memory of Grodno citizens, attract their attention to *loci memoriae* (places of memory) in Grodno.

The state authorities began to pay attention to development of tourism in Belarus last year. The Grodno area could occupy an important place in tourism, because the Augustów channel that connects Poland, Belarus and Lithuania passes through the territory of Grodno. In this occasion the tourist guide *Grodno* in which the history of city (in a very short variant), monuments of history and culture: castles, temples, public architecture, memorials, educational and cultural establishments are described. It was published in Belarusian, Polish, and English languages. The guide highlights the multicultural character of Grodno. A special section is devoted to national structure of the population of the city and Belarusian festival of national cultures.