

**DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT IN INDEPENDENT
BELARUS**

By

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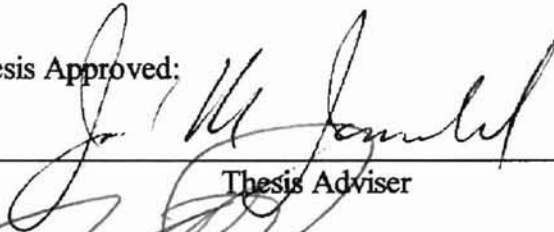
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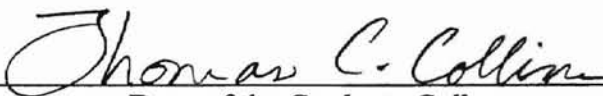
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PREFACE

This work was conducted to provide a higher level of understanding of the political process in one of the Newly Independent Countries - the Republic of Belarus. The countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, including Belarus are undergoing tremendous transformation practically in any area of policy. The understanding of these transformations, both their extent and direction, from post-communist society such as Belarusian to the democratic one is vital to the future development of political relationships between the countries of the former Soviet block and Western countries.

A review and analysis of information about independent political history of Belarus shows that democratic transitions are taking place, but very often too slow and not to a desirable extent. Belarus itself is not too significant international partner, however, some events there can serve as possible model of events in the NIS countries. Therefore it is important to evaluate the level and success of democratic development in the country.

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1. Introduction.

1.1. Prehistory and geopolitical position of Belarus.

Belarus is a relatively small country in Central Europe with the population more than 10 million, which is lying on the crossroads from Russia to Europe and from the Baltic sea to the Black sea. The country acquired independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union only a few years ago in 1991. For the first time after almost three hundred years of dependency on the Russian empire and later the Soviet Union, Belarusian people have the opportunity to decide their own fate. As a result there was no tradition of recent sovereignty and almost absolute absence of an experience of managing the country's politics and economy without Moscow government.

Industrial development of Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic was one of the highest in the former Soviet Union. Belarus had only a very few sources of raw material and energy in its territory, but the educational level and the level of performance in industry were very high. That's why during the USSR years quite a lot high-tech enterprises were allocated in the Republic. They used to produce cars and agriculture machinery, chemicals, electronic devices and micro chips, radio and TV equipment, textiles and others. For example, Belarus was third in the world as a producer of agriculture machines after the USA and Japan [23] and exported this commodity in more than 80 countries. Because of this, the level of life and the incomes in Belarus were among the highest in the Soviet Union during this period. However, all raw materials

and 90% of its energy Belarus was receiving from the former Soviet Union republics, mainly from Russia.

As the result of historical development, resources and economic background, independence came to the people of the republic unexpectedly. It was also uninvited by the governing structure of former Byelorussia, which was comprised of mostly conservative members of the Communist Party. Life in the country changed drastically after the collapse of the USSR. It happened not because of the good will of the government, but because processes outside the country, mainly in Russia and other newly independent states, made it impossible to support the communist regime in Belarus any longer. Conservatives in the government caused the slow development of the country toward democracy and a market economy, and tried to support the status quo of a centrally planned economy and communist dictatorship.

1.2. Significance of study.

It is well known that after the collapse of the Soviet Union all newly independent states claimed their intention to accomplish democratic transformation in their political life and transition to the market in their economy. Belarus was also among the supporters of democratic changes. The few years of independent development in the Republic of Belarus have shown that the process of the democratic transformation is very difficult.

It is important to understand all of the political and economic processes in

Belarus between the years 1991-1996 for the following reasons.

First, very similar processes of slowing political and economic development, numerous backups, were taking place to a different extent in every post Soviet republic, but in Belarus, as it will be shown further, they found the most clear expression, because of the absolute absence in Belarus nationalistic tensions.

Second, Belarus is lying on the crossroad from turbulent Russia to Western Europe. The politics and economy of Belarus can seriously affect in the future trade and relations between Russia and the European Union.

Third, today Belarus leans heavily toward Russia. As a result of pro-Russian international policy of government and the absence of violence in its territory, Belarus has not yet deserved the interest of the international community, and there are very few serious publications about the country. Actually there is not one review which includes the most important developments during the last years and which suggests some analysis of events.

Because of these reasons, the development of events in Belarus was chosen as the topic of this work. The main areas of research will be the political development and the economic situation in the country.

The main purpose of this work is an analysis of the level and success of democratic transformation in the politics and economy of Belarus on the basis of an analysis of political events and a forecast of possible development of events in the country in the near future.

1.3. Thesis statement.

1.3.1. Definition of a scale of analysis.

To analyze the level of democratic development in Belarus it is necessary to consider the events of political life in the country and to decide whether it is conservative or democratic. Therefore, it is necessary before further discussion to define a few major terms which will be used in the study such as conservative, moderate and democratic. All political events and political decisions will be evaluated in all areas of political and economic life in the context of this work according to the scale, conservative - moderate - democratic. In political science it is usual to use as the scale conservative - liberal, but in the case of Belarus, as it will be shown below, this scale can lead to confusion, because liberals in the country mostly represent right wing of conservatives view, pro-Russian, pro-communists view of members of Liberal party of Belarus. As the result, the following definitions are necessary for further analysis.

Conservative here means a variant of a decision or action, which causes the absence of any changes in politics or economy or the slowest possible changes. Such development probably will agree with former Soviet approach to politics or the economy.

Conservative in this study in a large part is possible to name as view supporting former communist ideology. **Democratic** in this context means any decision or action which agree with the transition to a real legal society, where political power rests on the people not monarchs and not elite groups, and market economy, which is necessary for

development of a democratic society. A moderate level of policy or political solution will be the case when democrats are not able to do as they want, but conservators also not able to stop democratic development. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to provide a more detailed scale of evaluation.

Section 3.2. will provide a more specific description of the scale. This scale will create a background for the unified analysis of the events of political and economical life of Belarus.

1.3.2. Thesis statements.

In the result of the analysis it will be proved that:

- the level of democratic development of political life in Belarus today is moderate with a conservative shift. The new Constitution of the Republic provides a very good background for democratic development in any area of political life, but attempting the implementation of democratic laws meets strong opposition of conservative politics represented mainly by former Soviet "nomenclatura".
- the political development in the nearby future will be slow and uncertain as the result of the strong influence of conservatives on politic in Belarus, but it will be development in the direction of further democratic transformation and market reform.
- the tendency to join with the Russian Federation will continue to exist and there is a small possibility of a loss of independence, but according to the results of analysis, this union will be created only in an economic area.

1.4. Descriptions of the work.

This work will have four chapters. The introduction provides a background of the study, significance and purpose of the work, and the thesis statements. The second part will be devoted to the literature review. Also, reliability of different sources of information will be considered in this chapter. The third chapter will describe the methods of analysis and characteristics of political life of the country along with the variation scale. Next, the most important part, will have analysis of information about Belarusian political and economical life. Finally, a few conclusions will be made on the possible development of events in the future.

However, it is necessary to mention that this work has limitations as the result of the absence of systematic statistical data about the country and the lack of information about politics and economy of Belarus. This has led to limitation of methods analysis of all available information. Sources of information, used in the study, and their quality will be discussed in 2.1.

2. Literature review.

2.1. Information sources.

Belarus is a new independent state which gained its independence in 1991. It is a typical post communist society. It is trying to make changes in political life toward a more democratic society and in economic life toward a more efficient market economy. This part will consider the information on these topics, which is available today in the United States and Byelorussian republic.

It is necessary to mention sources of information about events in Belarus, and discuss their quality, because a few of them, especially with Belarusian origin, needs careful consideration. The most reliable information and data are those which have been found in publication of official organizations in the West. First of all it is information and data from "Country Report. Belarus", which are provided by The Economic Intelligence Unit, a western international organization with headquarters in London and New York. The main purpose of this organization is to supply western organizations realistic and truthful information about political and economic development of practically every country in the world [7 - 10]. Second a respectful source is information and data from the Economic Bulletin for Europe, an international economic journal of UN/ECE [40].

Also, it is possible to evaluate the reliability of the official Belarusian government

documents as being very high, when these documents refer to publishing of legal documents and international agreements [22, 34, 36, 42, 44].

It is also possible to use a less reliable information source of American's political journals [for example 31, 30, 26, 14, 16] and Belarusian economic journals [20, 14, 15].

In this case, it is necessary to remember that the authors of these papers are using mostly statistical information of government officials, which tends to make these numbers less reliable. It is crucial to understand that during the Soviet Union era, coverups of important economic and political information was merely traditional policy of the Soviet government and "nomenclature". This tradition is still strong in Belarus because of two reasons. Conservative "nomenclature" is still keeping power in their hands, as it was discussed above, and real numbers of the state economy is so poor, that the government is still trying to decorate them. As it possible to see from a few respectful sources, there are really some differences in data of western organizations and from the government of Belarus [9, 40, 34, 12, 14].

Mass media sources were used mostly to get the most recent information about events in the country, but its' evaluation of reliability of such information is possible to make over time.

2.2. Politics.

2.2.1. *The beginning.*

Contemporary history of Belarus began in 1991. The last Soviet referendum about

preservation of the Soviet Union, which was held in the March 1991, got support of 83% of voters in Belarus. However, in spite of this, the events in Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic developed fastly toward independency . The economic situation was becoming worse. Significant decreases of the level of life led to a series of strikes in April 1991, which interrupted the quiet political life in the country. The strikers tried to gain an increase in wages. The government, headed by the Communist Party first secretary A.Malafeev and chairman of Supreme Council (Parliament of Belarus) M.Dementei, was forced to increase the wages of the workers first time for the seventy years. However, it was still able to keep power [3].

A famous Moscow putch in August 19, 1991 gave a final formal impetus for the disintegration of the USSR. During the first days after putch, such republics as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine officially claimed their independence. On August 25, Belarus also followed them and claimed its' sovereignty. It happened not because of good will of the government. Most part of government officials were conservative supporters of putchists. However, pressures of the events were very strong. The opinion of people, who supported idea of independence, and fear of the government itself to loose its' power, made the government to take real steps in the declaring of independence. The Chairman of Supreme Council, Dementei, who was one of the most active supporter of putchists, was forced to leave his post. At the same time the Prime Minister of Belarus, Vyacheslau Kebich, along with his cabinet announced the cancelling of their membership in the Communist Party. Activity of the Communist Party on the territory of Belarus was banned, and its' funds were confiscated. In the beginning of

September 1991, the Supreme Council elected deputy Stanislau Shushkevich, a representative of democratic faction of the parliament, as speaker [3, 45].

Right after this, also in September the Supreme Council changed the name of the state. Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic became Republic of Belarus. Also, they replaced the state flag and coat-of-arms with national symbols. Thus, the formal steps were taken to denote the sovereignty of the state. In the end of the year, the international community formally recognized independence of Belarus: Poland on September 3, Switzerland on December 23, the United States on December 25. In the first six months seventy countries of the world recognized Belarus as a sovereign state. On January 30, 1992, Belarus became a member of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). On the 7th of July Belarus became a full member of the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development [45].

2.1.2. Political development.

In the beginning in 1991 and 1992 the development of political events in the country made it possible to understand if one recalls two moments. The first moment was the confusion and feeling of uncertainty of conservative forces, such as most active of the members of the Communist Party and government. The second moment was euphoria and the seeming easiness of independence for the nationalist democratic movement, represented by Byelorussian People Front (BPF).

In 1992, democrats in the country, directed by BPF, gathered about half of a

million signatures in support of the national referendum about the early election of the Supreme Council (which had been elected on 1990, according the Soviet Constitution). Resistance of conservators who still had power was too strong, and this attempt to reelect parliament was unsuccessful. Political power in the country was left in the hands of conservative, procommunist Supreme Council

In 1993, there were only a few changes in the political life of the country. In May a Constitution of the country was drafted. The Constitution was created by Supreme Council Commission on the basis of constitutions of democratic western countries with the ideas of "democratic legal state, a division of powers, an independent court system, and respect to human and civil rights" [31]. Although this draft of the constitution was adopted, the old Soviet Constitution was still in force. The dominant event of political life this year was a rivalry between the Supreme Council chairman S. Shushkevich and Prime Minister V.Kebich.

Stanislav Shushkevich, as chairman of Supreme Council, actually was the head of the state. He was moderate supporter of democratic reforms and of the transition to market economy. His idea was the creation of modern democratic neutral state without nuclear weapons and a large army. At the same time, he saw nothing bad in a close economic relationship with Russia, and was initiator and defender of creation of Commonwealth of Independent States, patterned on the European Union. However, he was strictly against any military or security alliance with Russia [30, 31].

Vyacheslau Kebich expressed his politics conservative views of former "nomenclature". He supported the independence of state, but insisted on close relations

with Russia and didn't want any significant changes in economy of Belarus [30, 31].

It is absolutely understandable that parliament of Belarus, which consisted then of 90% of conservators and only 10% democrats (mainly members of BPF) supported Prime Minister. In spite of the lack of support in Supreme Council, Shushkevich, who had supporters in few key position in the government, was still able to have positive influence on the politics of government. It was especially important in April, when the Supreme Council wanted Shushkevich to sign the Commonwealth of Independent States Security Pact. He refused to do it, because his opinion signing of the Pact was against the Declaration of Byelorussian State Sovereignty (Article 10) voted on 1991 by Supreme Council itself and the draft of the new Constitution [29, 31]. After this, conservators called for "vote of no confidence in Shushkevich as chairman.". But with the support of the opposition Shushkevich did not leave his post in Supreme Council, because of the lack of quorum during vote, even with 168 deputies voting against him [29, 30, 31].

An opinion poll, which was taken for the first time in independent Belarus, also showed that most of the population supported Shushkevich. Kebich had a significantly smaller number of supporters. During the whole year he was only in the third position after Stanislau Shushkevich and representative of BPF Zenon Paznyak [28]. In 1993, Kebich along with the conservative parliament could not remove Shushkevich from Chairman of Supreme Council office. The rivalry of these two people was merely an expression of struggle between democrats and "nomenclature" in the society as the whole. Democrats then had the support of the population and trade unions, but conservator had offices and real power in their hands [28 - 31, 45].

Another attempt was taken by the opposition and trade unions to hasten the election of new parliament. They collected 738 thousand signatures supporting election in spring 1994, one year earlier [28, 30]. Parliament, frightened with strength of this democratic movement, promised that it would be done. But as it will be shown it did not keep its' promise [30].

2.1.3. Political forces in Belarus.

After Belarus gained independence, the Communist Party was banned. Its' property and funds were confiscated. It left free space for political activity of other parties for the first time in 70 years. Already in the beginning of 1992, there were about twenty different political parties, most of them continue their activity today.

All parties were possible to divide according to their attitude to major problems of society in Belarus, such as how and where to find solutions of economic crises, levels of sovereignty and the relationships with Russia. Most significant parties with notable membership were:

Democratic parties that are acting along with BPF: The United Democratic Party, The Belarusian Social-Democratic Union (Hramada), The Byelorussian Peasant Party, The Belarusian Ecological Union, The Party of Businessmen of Belarus. All these parties have specific areas of interest, but their political views on major issues unite them with BPF.

Conservative forces are represented by the Communist Party, which was relegalized in February 1993 without return of confiscated property, Liberal Party of

Belarus, "White Union". Some of these parties, for example "White Union", are propagating not only pro-Russian politics, but also suggest to simply subjugate Belarus again to Russia [31, 45].

Although there are a large number of parties, it is necessary to note that any of these parties lacks real support from the population, which is really passive in its political choice. In 1992, when political life was relatively active, 56% of voters "are not leaning to any of political forces." [45].

2.1.4. Presidential election of 1994.

The situation and relations between political forces in the Republic described above. It showed that the fight between democrats and conservators had no reasonable solutions. Shushkevich successfully stonewalled the Supreme Council attempt to create a security alliance with Russia. In turn, the Supreme Council did their best to slow down or prevent all economic reforms favored by Shushkevich.

This situation came to an end on 16 December when the chairman of the Supreme Council Anticorruption Committee Aleksander Lukashenka charged both Kebich and Shushkevich with corruption. Later, in the second half of January 1994, two Lithuanian Communists were extradited from the territory of Belarus to the Lithuanian government. They were wanted for their role in the death of 14 people in January of 1991 in Vilnius. However, proper procedure was not abided. This incident sharpened the negative attitude of the conservative faction of parliament toward Shushkevich and his supporters in government, such as Minister of Internal Affairs U. Yashchuk, Chairman of the state

Committee for Security (KGB) Lieutenant General E. Shirkovski and Prosecutor-General V. Shaladonau [30], who was responsible for the incident.

In January 24 of 1994, the Supreme Council successfully voted for dismissal of Yahorau and Shirkovski. On the next day the deputies used this excuse to recall the charges of corruption against Shushkevich and this time he was voted out of office, even in spite of the fact that very few in Belarus believed in the reality of these charges, according to the opinion of Ustina Marcus [30]. Successor on the post of Chairman of Supreme Council was Mechislau Hryb, a hard-conservator and supporter of Prime Minister [28 - 30]. Real power in the state was shifted to Kebich, who had almost unanimous support of the parliament.

The new Constitution was finally passed in the Supreme Council and became law. It happened on March 30, 1994. It created the post of the President of Republic Belarus and gave to the President extensive power, although it was restricted by the parliament. The most important restrictions are the following: first, the President of Belarus can't dissolve the Supreme Council, and second, only the parliament is able to announce a state of emergency in Belarus. Presidential election was decided to be held on June 23. Actually, the post of the president was created especially for Vyacheslau Kebich, who believed that with the support of the parliament and mass-media, which was still controlled by the government, he would win elections without any problems.

Six candidate for president of Belarus formed two clearly distinctive groups. One group was the pro-Russian conservators, who differs in their programs but not too significantly. It was Kebich, Novikau and Dubko. Paznyak and Shushkevich were the

representatives of independence and market reforms. Only two of the candidates represented political parties: Novikau - the Communist Party of Belarus and Paznyak - Belarusian People Front. The rest were independent candidates. The last candidate, Aleksander Lukashenka, who stood apart from others, because his election program tended to be pro-Russian, but he had young and resourceful command of advisers, who represented a democratic way of political development [27, 26, 19].

Turnout of voters was very high - 70% and results of presidential election was very guide for everybody in the country and outside observers. Results are

Table 1. Results of presidential election in Belarus in 23 June 1994 [9].

	Presidential candidate	Party	% of vote
1.	A.Lukashenka	independent	45
2.	V.Kebich	independent	17.3
3.	Z.Paznyak	BPF	12.8
4.	S.Shushkevich	independent	9.9
5.	V.Dubko	independent	6.0
6.	V.Novikau	communist	4.9

shown in the Table 1 [9]. Lukashenko won with large advantage over his rivals.

The main points of the programs of the conservative candidates were not distinctively different and the results of election with victory of the youngest and most unexperienced, Alexander Lukashenka, were possible to explain because of three reasons. First, it was more of a protest against old nomenclature candidates rather than

support of his program [9, 26]. Second, he had young, active, and trusted advisors, as it was mentioned above, from the post communist generation of politicians, who were supposed to stay with him after the victory as his main appointees. And finally, his previous activity as the head of parliamentary Committee on Anticorruption gained him popularity and trust of voters [25, 26].

2.1.5 Parliamentary election 1995.

All of the promises made by Supreme Council to held parliamentary elections in 1994 were not kept, and only in the spring of 1995, when term of old parliament was over, it decided to held elections on May 14. The first round of elections was practically a failure. It succeeded to elect less than half of the deputies: 119 out of 260 [4]. This happened mainly because of the low activity of electorate. In 26 districts, turnover was lower than the required 50%. In the rest, candidates did not reach the required barrier of 50% of the ballots. It brought a problem to the political life of the country [28]. The new Supreme Council could not begin its work, because it did not have three quarters of the deputies required by the Constitution. President Lukashenko called to change the Constitution decrease quorum to two fifths [4]. The old deputies rejected this and decided to wait for a repeated election in November, already having their sixth year in the parliament. The President called the old parliament illegitimate [4], and proclaimed that he would govern the country without parliament, although such an action of the president is against the Constitution. In November, necessary quorum finally was elected and the new Supreme Council began its term with 221 deputies from

Together, with the parliamentary election, on the same day as a result of the President initiative and under the President tremendous pressure on the Supreme Council and Constitutional Court a referendum was held. The four questions on the referendum are given in the Table 2. The Supreme Council and Constitutional Court was against referendum because it contained questions against new Constitution of the state, according their opinion, and main purpose of referendum was Lukashenka's wish to get more support of the people of Belarus to use this support in his relationship with the parliament [5].

Table 2. Results of the referendum 14 May 1995 [5].

	Question.	Answer "yes" %
1.	To give or not to the Russian language status of state language along with the Byelorussian?	83.06
2.	To change the state symbols to Soviet time symbols?	76.3
3.	To support economic integration with Russia?	82.3
4.	To grant the President the right to dissolve Supreme Council?	77.9

On one hand, the results of the referendum were very spectacular. All the questions of referendum were related to Lukashenka's initiatives in politics, and Lukashenko got support on all initiatives, according to the results of the referendum.

Table 2 [5] shows the questions and the results of referendum. Will it help the President to reach his political goals or to solve the problems of the country as he promised - it is not clear. It is necessary to make changes in the Constitution and for this the President needs a vote of three quarter of the parliament, but because of his complicated relationships with parliament, it is more than doubtful. As a result of the referendum, instead of solutions to the problems in the country, Lukashenko added more problems to political life in the Republic. Using the results of referendum, after the first unsuccessful round of parliament elections, as it was mentioned above, he tried to claim the old parliament illegitimate and introduce presidential rule in the country. This attempt to gain more power did not bring success also [4].

2.1.6. Political life today.

In contemporary life of Belarus, political decision are made by both the Supreme Council and the President. The direction of the future decisions of new parliament, which began to work only in December 1995, is not clear yet. In Table 3, it is possible to see distribution of political forces in Supreme Council on the 16th of January, 1996 [33]. Communists, as it is easy to predict stand against capitalization of Belarusian economy and for the close union with Russia. The agrarian fraction represents a mixture of political views with privatization of the land and economic union with Russia. Social-democrats is the faction which consist of representatives of few parties and don't have shared unified program. Civic action - the faction stands for democratic changes in the country and the market economy, for the real sovereignty of

Belarus.

Table 3. Distribution of political faction in Supreme Council [33].

Political faction	% of deputies	Number of deputies
Communists	21.2	42
Agrarians	16.7	33
Civic Action	8.1	16
Social-democrats	6.1	12
Nonpartisan	48.0	95

The decisive power is in the hands of nonpartisan deputies, who are forming the largest group in parliament without creation of any faction. This faction consists mostly from the representatives of technocrats such as directors and top managers of industrial enterprises and managers of collective farms, which in the largest part are conservative supporters of economic union with Russia. However, it is possible to see that the Supreme Council has no majority on a political basis.

The President of Belarus - Alexander Lukashenka, as a politic and the head of the state, is a very controversial figure. He has no experience of political work on such a high level, besides activity as Chairman of Committee on Anticorruption. All his life he dealt with the local level of government. He has no background or education either in politics or the economy. Already, after one year in office, it became clear that his internal and international policy is erratic and unpredictable [37]. Very soon, almost all

his advisers from the young command which helped him during the campaign and entered office together with Lukashenka, left him [25, 38]. Today, his government consists of real mixture of conservators and democrats.

Political life in the republic in the fall of 1995 became more active. On August 17, 1995, the strike of the transportation workers began. The President immediately demanded to stop the strike. When, instead of stopping, strikers asked about support of other free trade unions and gathered near the trade union headquarters, police made arrests of a few trade union activists. Lukashenko motivated his action with the reason that the strike was organized with the help of Western intelligence services [36, 39].

Later on September 23, the President published a decree "On Certain Measures to Ensure Stability and Law and Order in the Republic of Belarus", which banned the activity of free trade unions, participation of strikes and put restrictions on the deputies immunity. But the decree, which caused negative reactions both in the country and abroad, was overruled by the Constitutional Court of Belarus as contradicting the Constitution and international law, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. At the same time, Lukashenko uses his usual methods dealing with Belarusian mass-media. Few newspapers came out with white spots, because of censor actions. Few other newspapers, which were representing the opposition press, were closed [1, 2, 24]. Some of the chief-editors were removed by the personal orders of the President Lukashenka. These actions really harmed the image of democracy in Belarus in eyes of foreign observers, and a representatives of the European Union expressed their worries about political situation in Belarus.

2.2. Security and military policy

After the collapse of the Soviet Union Belarus, along with Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan, inherited nuclear weapons. However, attitudes toward this issue were different from the rest of nuclear republic. Belarus clearly claimed, in the very beginning, that it will be a military neutral and nuclear free. The Declaration of Sovereignty said: "No military units of other countries, their military bases and installation shall be deployed on the territory of the Belorussian Supreme Council. The Belarus sets the aim of making its territory a nuclear free zone and of becoming a neutral state" [43, 45].

With creation of CIS, there was an attempt to create a common security council - so called "Council of Defense Ministers of the CIS". Belarusian representatives did not agree to participate in this Council with the motive of not to provide any legal basis which can be used against the country's neutrality. It is necessary to note in this connection that because of geo strategic position of Belarus, it had on its territory about 240 000 servicemen of the former Soviet troops. According to Shushkevich's evaluation it was the largest in the world concentration of troops: 1 serviceman for 43 citizen [45]. With the idea of neutrality, Belarus needs in it not more than 60 000 army. With idea of nuclear free zone, it was necessary to remove all nuclear armament from the territory. According to the Lisbon agreement between the USA and nuclear republics of the former USSR, which was held on 1992, Belarus must destroy or transfer to Russia all strategic nuclear weapons [45, 46]. On February 1993, Byelorussian parliament

ratified START-1 and the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Also, it was announced that nuclear weapons will be removed from the territory of the republic until the middle of 1995 and Russian troops had to go back to Russia at the end of 1995. Necessary steps were taken to reach this goal - to remove Russian troops from the territory of Belarus.

In spite of many attempts to make Belarus part of the CIS Security Treaty, which is actually a security treaty with Russia, up to the end of 1995 Belarus still did not participated in any security or military agreement. After the removal of Shushkevich, the CIS Collective Security Pact was signed by Belarus, but with two provisions, which Russia still did not want to accept. This Pact was not ratified by Russian Duma in 1995. Belarusian parliament, however, refused to sign the Russian variant of agreement, where the issue was that the Russian government had right to place military division on Belarusian territory without asking for the permission of the Belarusian government or the Supreme Council. Therefore, up to the beginning of year 1996, there was no military union between the Russian federation and Belarus [29].

Dismantlement and transfer of nuclear arms, and Russian troops was being accomplishing more or less according schedule, but with Western help. That is why the attitude in the country toward nuclear weapons was quite different from that in Ukraine, which was trying to use nuclear weapon as the mean of pressure on the international community [29]. However, at the same time with usual pro-Russian tendency in the parliament, and with the purpose to get cheaper oil and gas from Russia, Belarus agreed to permit Russia to use a few communication and the radar station on the territory of Belarus and also granted permission to use Belarusian airfields for 130 Russian aircraft

during the next 25 years [11].

2.3. Chernobyl.

There is one additional issue in Belarusian politics and economy, which is impossible to avoid, while speaking about Belarus. It is the Chernobyl disaster, which happened in 1986, five years before independence, but it still has tremendous affect on all areas of country life. About 70% of the radioactive fallout contaminates 30% of the territory of republic. According to evaluations of Belarusian specialists and government, the total economic damaged reached 16 annual budgets of the republic [17]. Every year after independence, Belarus must spend from 17 to 20% of GNP on the Chernobyl cleanup, medical benefits, and healthcare [13].

After Chernobyl, when the size of ecological disaster became clear, the government of the USSR claimed that it would do anything to prevent the hard consequences of this catastrophe in Belarus and Ukraine. After the collapse of the former Soviet Union Russia, who took responsibility for the USSR debts, repeated that it would help Belarus with necessary amount of money. This promises were practically forgotten and Belarus was left without any help, except for a small charitable programs in Western European countries, such as Germany. These programs provided mainly medical devices, medicine, and educational courses in Western hospitals to help Belarusian specialist to deal with the health problems, caused by radioactive contamination. The number of people, who live in the contaminated with cesium 137

territory, according to the most modest evaluation of Belarusian officials is about 1.8-2.2 million, and among them are 440,000 children [17].

Besides direct economic effect, Chernobyl brought to Belarus widespread negative attitude to all nuclear power. This phenomena strongly affects energy production in the republic. In the middle of the 80s, there was plan to build 80 kilometers from Minsk another nuclear power plant, which could provide energy for all Belarus. After the Chernobyl the building of this plant was stopped, and later when it became clear that the energy crises led to economic disaster even Belarusian government had no courage to discuss nuclear energy as alternative to Russian oil and gas. However, in last year the intention to solve energy problem with the help of a new nuclear plant was expressed again. There are a few claims of governmental officials about the plans to build, with the help of France and Germany, a nuclear power plant. Yet a reaction of Belarusian people is not entirely clear [16]

2.4. Foreign policy.

Belarus, as it was mentioned in the introduction, is placed in the geographical center of Europe. This geopolitical position, between East and West, has defined foreign policy of the country. However, while discussing the international relations of Belarus, it is necessary to remember that historically it was, and still is, tied very closely to Russia and the other Newly Independent States.

Belarusian government and politicians had no clear understanding of what is

foreign policy and what place Belarus takes in the international arena. In real life, it happens that during almost four year of independence, the Byelorussian Supreme Council never considered Byelorussian foreign policy. Besides the occasion when the foreign policy of the country were touched while discussion of such issues as disarmament or signing the START Treaty the government of Belarus did not define the main principle of foreign policy. In the country, it looks like Belarus has no foreign policy at all and all international relations are driven by external forces or everyday needs connected with foreign loans or international trade [41].

Even today, Belarus has no qualified diplomats in foreign ministry and in some Belarusian embassies still working Russian diplomats [18].

Still, there are few agreements on cooperation and trade with such Western countries as Germany and the United States. Still about 30% of the trade is a share of Western and developing countries (Belarus has trade with 96 countries), but such agreements of action look more as incidents than a regular foreign policy. A volume of trade with the world is \$1.5 billion, which sounds ridiculous if compared with Belgium, which has the same population, but the volume of its trade is \$50 - 60 billion [41].

A little different foreign policy of Belarusian government has to do with Russia and other CIS countries. Belarus is merely too dependent on the Russian supply of energy and as a result, besides a very few occasions like security treaty Belarus usually is taking similar with Russia position in the foreign policy.

The best relationship Belarus has with the neighbor country of Poland. The volume of trade with Poland actually takes the second place after Russia, and first with

non CIS countries. There are a lot of different links not only governmental which are tying two countries together.

In conclusion, it is only necessary to note the two important points in Belarusian foreign policy with its neighboring countries. First, Belarus claimed in the beginning that any arguments about the common borders will be solved only on the peaceful base of mutual agreement. And actually, there were no serious conflicts on this issue, even if there were some problems, especially with Lithuania and Latvia [45]. Second, there is no ethnic problem either in the country with few minorities (13% of population in Belarus are Russians, Ukrainians, Poles and smaller national groups), or in the neighboring countries with those Belorussians who are living abroad. There are, for example, 240,000 belarusians in Poland [19].

2.5. Economic policy.

2.5.1. *Economic background.*

The economic situation of Belarus in the former Soviet Union was not too bad if compared with most of the republics. It was industrial-agrarian country with a relatively new, post World War II, equipment and technology. GDP was equal to \$60,325 billion and GDP per person \$5,900 in the year 1990 before independence. It was a typical Soviet command economy with centralized control over everything, which failed in competition with the Western world. Disintegration of economy in the USSR began long before the real political collapse and it was possible to see this in

Belarus also, because industry was in very large part tied to the rest of the Soviet Union industry [9].

Still it was possible to call Belarus an industrial republic, because with only a population of 3.6% from population of the USSR, Belarusian industry produced, for example, 11.2% of lathes, 22.5% motorcycles, 14.2 tractors, 11.3% refrigerators, 11.6% TV sets, 26.8% synthetic fiber and 18.2% mineral fertilizers [45]. Belarus was the third largest producer of tractors, after the USA and Japan [23]. In agriculture, Belarus was more or less self sufficient, besides fruits and wheat.

In spite of the satisfactory state of economy, there were a few very important factors which could affect and affected in reality state of economy in independent Belarus .

1. Overdependence on the import from other republic of the USSR, mainly from Russia, raw material and energy.
2. The combination of centralized command economy and strong military-industrial complex..
3. Subordination of 54% of industry in Belarus to Central government in Moscow. It was the largest and the best part of industry [45].

Existence of these factors led to the decline of the economy after independence as a result of the breaking of economic links with other republics, collapse of military industrial complex and inability of the conservative government to provide efficient market reforms.

Table 4. Main indicators of Belarus economies [40**, 44]

Economic indicators	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995 (Jan-July)
GDP at market price (Rb bn)	40.1	79.7	955.0	11,000	na	na
NMP at market price (Rb bn)	29,510	62,633	780,048	9,000	na	na
Real NMP growth %	-3.2	-1.9	-10.6 -9.6	-11.6 -10.6	-20.0	- 12 **
Consumer price inflation %	4.5	83.5	1,016	1,188 1,190	2,221	1,945 **
Population m	10.28	10.33	10.38	10,40		
Exports (Rb m)	19,000	38,300	350,000	na	na	
Import (Rb m)	19,800	40,100	400,000	na	na	

** Economic Bulletin for Europe

na - not available

2.5.2 Independent economy.

The economy continued to decline the first year after independence, but in 1991 and the beginning of 1992, it was still possible to get energy sources, particularly oil and gas and some raw materials with relatively cheap prices, and therefore, the level of GDP, industrial production and inflation, was tolerable. However, even in the beginning it was necessary to take decisive steps in the transition from centralized command economy to the market to provide future normal development of the economy and to prevent further decline. The specific numbers which illustrate conditions of Belarusian economy in last year before independence and four years after possible to find in Table 4.

This time, as it was described above, the power in the state was in the hands of pro-Russian government. They thought that it is possible to continue to have Russian support for the needs of Belarusian economy, to have cheap a energy source from Russia and huge Russian market to sell Belarusian goods. They hoped that it will be possible to maintain the status quo without the market economy [45, 31].

However, economic development in the neighbor countries including Russia, who had taken steps to a real market, did not leave any choice to the Belarusian government. It was forced to make some changes in the economy, such as changes of financial system, privatization, opening market, but these measures were undertaken when it was impossible to avoid them without risking to brake relations with Russia or such organization as IMF and with extremely slow path [31, 10, 40].

It is necessary to note that there have been no serious measures to overcome

economic crises. Instead, inflation has changed into hyperinflation, industrial production has continue to decline, agriculture almost collapsed [7 - 10]. A slower decline of the economy is possible to see only in late 1995, but systemic numbers for this period are not available yet.

In 1993, the economic situation became worse. Industrial production fell 16.3% during first half of the year. The inflation level increase up to 30% per month in April and 40-50% in October [31, 23]. Because of the high energy prices, Belarusian production became noncompetitive on the Russian market, where 80% of goods were sold earlier and it has nothe access to other markets. As a result, the level

Table 5. Main parameters of Belarusian economy in 1995 (according to European Bulletin [40]).

	Economic parameters	First half of 1994	First half of 1995
1.	GDP (% change)	-10	-12
2.	Gross industrial output (% change)	- 9.6	- 11
3.	Unemployment rate (%)	1.8	2.3
4.	Consumer prices (% change over the same period)	607	193
5.	Current account balance (\$ mln)	- 253	- 169
6.	Flows of foreign investment (\$ mln)	5	5

of life in Belarus dropped substantially. If to compare with the average income in 1990, which was approximately \$3600, in the end of 1995 incomes of 87% of populations were less than \$1000 [33]. It is possible to see the main parameters which are describing Belarusian economy in the first half 1995 (January - September) in the Table 4 [40].

It was especially relevant in problems with energy supply. Belarus depends on the import of energy on 90%. It always received oil and gas from Russian sources. When the Russian economy began transformation to the market, it became impossible to continue purchase of energy with subsidized prices. Also, there are problems with the declining of oil production in Russia. The Russian government prefers to take care about the needs of Russian economy or to sell oil and gas to the West for hard currency. As a result of this the needs of Belarus are not satisfied in full volume. For example, with the needs of economy Belarus has to get around 22 million tons of oil. In 1992 Belarusian economy got 1.4 million less. In the next year it got 5.5 million less [22]. Even such amount of energy supply Belarus can not pay off. Every year, huge energy debts are accumulated (on 1 August 1995 the size of debt for gas was \$460 million, according to [34]). Partly they are paid by barter, but with the lack of Russian currency, as it will be discussed below, with the lack of other hard currency, Belarus has some serious difficulties. The severe lack of energy supply led to the decline in every sector of industry and especially agriculture. As usual, the Belarusian government make an attempt to solve this problems with the help of economic agreement with Russia, instead of development any other solutions. It also uses those

loans, which are provided by IMF and governments of the Western countries for the development of the Belarusian economy [22].

Reasons of such unprofessional behavior of Belarusian government are very clear. Those, who had some knowledge and wanted to do something with economy, had no power. Those who had power, did not know how and did not want to make any changes. They have waited and are waiting now for economic salvation from Russia. However, the Russian Federation does not hurry to help, especially on charitable conditions. It is necessary to pay and the Belarusian government is trying to pay with the sovereignty of the country.

2.5.3. Economic and monetary union with Russia.

The hope that the Russian government will help providing cheaper energy than on the world market of raw material found its expression in the idea of economic union with Russia. This idea gave way to the initiative in creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States. But CIS economic union did not work the way that the Belarusian government hoped for (and any governments of former Soviet republics, who joined CIS). Additionally in 1992, problems began with Russian ruble. Trying to stop inflation, the Russian government restricted amount of Russian ruble and brought with this measure a severe shortage of ruble to Belarus. This, and the attempt to continue subsidizing of goods in Belarus, led to introduction of so called additional temporarily currency, which was printed by the Belarusian government and was in use together with the Russian ruble. However, the Russian government considered that

the existence of such double currency would harm the Russian economy, and in July 1992 carried out financial and currency reform. Belarus had to think about its own national currency, but old hopes gave a way to the idea of a monetary union with Russia, which stopped the development of national currency and led to use of temporary currency up to date. The temporary currency immediately began to drop in value. If in August 1992, a dollar cost about 30 ruble, in 1993 - 2,730, today (March 1996) it is already 11,500 [7 - 10, 23]. In spite of the separation of financial systems very soon it became clear for the government that practically permanent failure to pay for energy needed some solutions. The solutions they saw also in the monetary union with Russia. And, in September, the Belarusian Prime Minister Kebich and the Russian Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin signed an agreement on a new type of ruble zone within CIS. This agreement was almost unanimously ratified in November 1993 by Supreme Council. But this monetary union still is not implemented even today. The reason is that both government could not reach consensus while discussing specific issues of this union such as level of sovereignty over financial decisions of Belarus. Stanislau Bahdankevich, the chairman of Belarusian National Bank, and a very influential politician argued that Russian terms of this merger were absolutely unrealistic and could destroy country independence. The main Russian condition of "the ruble zone" creation was that only Russian government had to be able to decide what amount of rubles had to be printed and only Russian government can regulate such financial parameters as interest rates and exchange rates. In turn, Russia also did not want to create "the ruble zone" with Belarus on Belarusian conditions with

motivation that such action will seriously harm Russian economy [9, 23]. And today, the situation with the monetary union is not more clear. On one hand such a union is desired very much by conservators and old "nomenclature", on the other hand, such union on Russians terms contradicts to content of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus [44]. The events of last year showed it is not so easy to change the Constitution even with majority in parliament.

According to commentary of Western specialists, "The bid for monetary union with Russia represents an open rejection of economic reform" [9].

The last joint adventure with Russia is the Custom Union between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. This agreement became the first agreement which actually begin to work. It assumes the cancellation of custom trade barriers on between Belarus and Russia, similar principles and prices with other countries and unified regulation of international trade in both countries. Also, it supposes existence of a similar mechanism of regulation of market both in Belarus and Russia [42].

2.5.4. Privatization

In spite of attempts to support status quo in the country economy, the Belarusian government forced by circumstances to begin changes toward a market. The Constitution of the country contains all necessary laws, which are necessary for market economy. The Constitution provides equal opportunity for any type of properties, including private, which was impossible during the Soviet times [43, 44]. It states against direct government regulation of the economic activity on all levels, as it was

during administrative-command economy, permitting only indirect measures such as tax and interest rates regulation. However, the Constitution does not specify those types of property, which can be held by private owners. As a result, the government of Belarus, began real privatization only in year 1993. It refers to privatization of industry. The State Program of Privatization supposed that already in the end of 1993 a number of private enterprises in Belarus would be 10%. But today it is clear that the government is not in hurry with privatization. This 10% (140 privatized industrial enterprises) was reached only up to the beginning of 1995 [20].

The privatization of the land is accomplishing even more slowly. A very strong lobby in the parliament, representing collective farms, provides serious restriction on this process. As the result, preference in buying a piece of land will have a collective farm. The amount of land in one hand will be restricted by law [44]. The Belarusian government has the requirement of Russia to provide the same level of transformation of economy, as in Russia, this is condition of economic union with Russia. Also, it has the requirement of the International Monetary Fund about the necessary for loans level of development of the economy. These two reasons are pushing the government to privatization, liberalization of prices, liberalization of import - export operations, transformation of the financial system, suspension of subsidies to inefficient enterprise and collective farms [34].

2.5.5. International trade.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union almost all economic links between

industry in different republics broke down. The economy of Belarus was in great need of renewing these links and establishing new one to provide its economy with energy, raw material, consumer goods and to sell its production to get incomes in hard currencies.

Belarus today is an active participant on the international market, but it bis

Table 6. Foreign trade of Belarus [14].

	Data Source	Export			Import		
		1992	1993	1994**	1992	1993	1994**
1	Goskomstat trade data						
	Non-CIS countries	1,061	715	398	751	747	269
	CIS countries	1,262	1,002	494	865	1,142	571
2	Balance of payment (IMF) (*National Bank)						
	Non-CIS countries	1,082	838	477*	741	996	539*
	CIS countries	2,489	2,108	691*	2,462	2,303	918*
3	Share of CIS in total trade						
	National Bank	60.8	59.0	59.1	69.9	61.8	63.0
	IMF	69.7	71.6	n.a.	76.9	69.8	n.a.
4	Share of trade in GDP						
	National Bank	68.3	49.6	n.a.	65.2	63.4	n.a.
	IMF	88.3	71.6	n.a.	79.2	80.1	n.a.

1,2 data in \$USA (conversion from Belarusian rubles was made by [39])

3,4 data in %

n.a. - not available

necessary to develop this participation further. It is full member of GATT. In August 1994, it receives Most Favored Nation (MNF) status from the USA. The share in foreign trade of Belarus for Western countries about 30%, and about 70% is share of the former Soviet republics. However, it is necessary to note, as it was discussed in [14], the access of Belarusian producers to the European market is very often limited. One of the reasons is a limited quota to export from Belarus. Especially it is possible to refer such phenomena to export of fertilizers on the European Union market.

The share of Russia is 83% of CIS trade mostly responsible for import in Belarus gas, oil and oil-products and raw materials. Belarus are paying for these commodities with barter, which consist of agriculture mashinery, TV-sets, friezers, chemicals, meat and vegetables. Table 6. shows foreign trade of Belarus in years 1992-1994 [8, 14].

From the collapse of the USSR, there are only small changes in the foreign trade structure of Belarus. To get access to Western market it is necessary to have products, which answer the main requirement of this market - quality. Main products which are exported on the West and also in CIS countries are the same . It is chemicals, machinery and transport equipment, fertilizers and food. In the Table 7. products of export and import are shown [14].

To create favorable a climate for investment, including foreign, it is possible to reorient the country more toward West, using geographical position of Belarus and cheap workforce. Today, with proRussian policy of government, it is too early to speak about such opportunities [14].

Table 7. Product structure of import and export in Belarus [14].

		Export to				Import from			
		Non-CIS	Russia	CIS & Baltics	All countr.	Non-CIS	Russia	CIS & Baltics	All countr.
1	Mineral products	11.6	3.8	11.1	7.9	3.8	70.7	6.8	38.6
2	Chemical products	32.4	3.5	1.3	12.6	18.1	2.1	1.7	7.4
3	Textile & textile articles	12.8	18.1	15.9	15.9	3.6	1.7	7.3	3.2
4	Base metal & metalproduct	7.7	3.9	4.9	5.4	3.6	12.1	26.8	11.5
5	Machinery & equipment, electric goods	7.2	21.1	14.0	15.0	27.7	6.4	12.3	14.4
6	Vehicle & other transport equipment	11.4	35.4	25.6	25.4	2.4	0.3	0.8	1.1
7	Instruments & apparatus	1.9	0.9	0.7	1.2	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
8	Vegetable products	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.3	18.1	0.1	26.2	10.1

2.5.6. Economy 1995.

It is possible to make a little summary of the state of the economy up to date. According to the requirements of both Russia and Western financial organization, the Belarusian government, in 1995, created the Program of urgent measures of overcoming economic crises in Belarus. This program is supposed to work during an eight month period and has the main purpose of stop decline of the economy. Thus, it has to slow down the fall of the industrial production, to decrease the inflation level to

the 10-11% per month (compare with 40-50% per month 1992 and even more in 1994 [36]), to increase level of life of Belarusian population [36]. The results of this measures are more or less sufficient, according to Belarusian sources [34]. Decline of the country economy continues, but the rate of decline is substantially smaller. GDP has fell to 11%, (in 1994 it was 28%). With deregulation of prices on agriculture production decline slows from 14% in 1994 to 3% in 1995 [12]. The level of inflation up to March 1995 was higher than expected, but after March, as a result of the stabilization policy of Belarusian National Bank decreased and in June was 2.5% [34].

Still there is a long way to real improvement of the Belarusian economy with really efficient measures. First, it is necessary to stop the government subsidies of weak and nonprofitable industrial enterprises, which still have been used, even in 1995, and to enact the law on bankruptcy. Second, it is necessary to hasten the privatization of industry and land, to provide a real basis for the market economy. Third, it is necessary to improve the financial system with market tax policy, with more freedom of banks, with credit and interest policy, which can help in the solution of financial problems. Forth, it is necessary to change investment policy to give possible investors better conditions [12, 34, 36].

3. Methods of research..

Two questions are necessary to discuss before the analysis of the country politics. First, it is information and data available from used sources. Second, a method of research, which is possible to use under circumstances.

3.1. Data.

In the beginning, it is important to mention that the topic of the work defines data sources. All data, which are discussed in here, are secondary data. Limited access to statistical database of the country does not permit the use of statistics of the Belarusian government, for example, on the monthly base.

Another important notion, which needs special discussion, is amount of data and information on the politics and economics, available in all these sources. As it was mentioned the main purpose of the work is to review the democratic development of the Belarusian policy after independence. It immediately gave serious restriction on the time period. It has been less than four years of independent development. Information for 1995 is not ready yet, and not yet published. Only a few numbers are available for the first half of year. Even if to add last year of the USSR - 1990 for the comparison, it will be the statistics maximum for a five year period. All data, which were possible to find, are given on a yearly basis, because there are no available sources of statistical data on the monthly basis, except a few with not more than 3-4

month in row.

All tables with secondary data are described in the literature review as part of the work, which is provided as a background information source for further analysis of democratic development. The table of characteristics of political development of the country is presented here. Also, it defines conservative - moderate - democratic development for each of the characteristics - area of policy - used for the analysis.

3.2. Method of analysis.

As one can see from the review, data available from different sources puts restriction on the possibility to apply real numerical statistical analysis. The available data on political events of the country permit only events analysis, because there is practically no numerical information in this area. The few data on the economic situation in the Republic Belarus enable us to provide only very restricted descriptive analysis or comparison of similar data from year to year or so-called descriptive time series analysis. These data are only able to show how the situation, with specific parameters, has been changing in these recent years.

However, to rely only on these few more or less systematic numbers is not enough. As a result, this work will also show a analysis of events on the basis of the available information on the discussed topics.

The events analysis is the method, which is possible to use for the analysis of nonnumerical information, when it is impossible to apply statistics. There are a few

rules, which make it possible with the help of analysis of events, to get scientific results. Such an analysis permits us to repeat a similar study by other independent researcher with the same outcome.. To use the events analysis in our case, when it will be mostly analysis of information on the political process in Belarus, it is necessary to define specific areas of policy, which will be chosen for the analysis and the rules of evaluation of events related to this specific area of policy.

In our case, when we deal with the political process (any considered areas of policy connected with political process, such as politics, economic policy, security policy, international policy and so on). All events used in this study for analysis of level of democratic development in Belarus are described in Table 8. Nine main areas of the country political life are used for analysis in the study. Every area of politics is possible to develop in conservative direction or democratic, as it was defined in 1.3.2. In Table 8 for all areas a specific scale of conservative - moderate - democratic developmen is given. In the areas of politics of Belarus, it is possible to see how balance of power between the democratic opposition and conservative "nomenclatura" is defining this or that political events or decision. For example, this scale for the characteristic of "Sovereignty or independence" gives as the conservative development a full sized union with the Russian Federation on one end of the scale, on the other for democratic development fully developed independence of the country in all areas of life including economic independence.

Actually these it is the most important part of study - the analysis of the events in each of the nine areas of policy. If to apply the scale conservative - moderate -

democratic for similar areas of policy in another country of the Eastern Europe, it will be possible to define a according level of democratization in this country too

Little is about the rules of analysis in the texts of reviewed sources. First of all, there is a set of political events of political decisions for every area, which is described in literature review. In the next part these events or decisions will be put on the scale with intermediate conclusion how, according to the scaling of events possible to evaluate this area of policy. In this connection, it would be useful to repeat the definition of the scale, given in 1.3.2. Here conservative means such political views or decisions, which supports the former communist regime, slows down the democratic transformation and market reform and opposes sovereignty of the country. Democratic means political views or decisions, which support independence of Belarus, full scale democratic transformations and market reforms. Moderate means partial political changes and partial market reforms with preservation of some features of the previous regime, such as social guarantees and state property for selected subjects of Belarusian economy.

On the basis of analysis of events in all these areas of political life and economy of the country, it is possible to make conclusions about success of a country policy or evaluation of possible development in the nearest future. Such an attempt to define, what tendency a conservative or democratic will prevail next few years, will be made in the last part of the work for the case of the Republic of Belarus.

Table 8. Main parameters of context analysis of politics in the Republic of Belarus.

	Parameter	Conservative	Moderate	Democratic
1.	Sovereignty or independence	Union with Russia in all areas, possible on the level of federative republic	Economic cooperation with Russia, but support of more or less independent status	Full independence
2.	Human rights	Restrictions on the freedom of press, rights for demonstration, peaceful protest	Respect to human rights, but possibility of occasional, not systematic misconduct	Freedom of speech, mass communications, respect to human rights
3.	Legal basis for democracy	Agree that it is necessary, but practicing Soviet style "underlaw act"	Law as the main basis of the country' life, but level of democracy lower	Creation of real legal basis for democracy and all actions of government or any other group or person only according to the law
4.	Security	Military union with Russia and existence of Russian military bases on the territory of the country	Neutrality, but respect to such powerful neighbor as Russia	Neutrality and ban on any military activity of another state in Belarus

5.	Foreign policy	Absence of independent foreign policy		Systemic and independent foreign policy equal relations with all partners
6.	Market economy	Do not believe in market and oppose "capitalization" of the country economy	Market economy but with strong state regulations	Decisive and fast transition to market economy
7.	Energy	To get cheap oil and gas from Russia	Russian sources, but at the same time attempts to find smth else, still not very clear what namely	To find alternative sources of energy and avoid in the future so full dependency on one country as source of raw material and energy
8.	Privatization	As low level of private property as possible	Level of privatization with large part of the state property	Privatization of industry and land with the purpose of creation of market economy
9.	Foreign investment	Unfavorable condition for foreign investment. Fear of capitalization of economy through investments.	Necessity to attract foreign investments, but to keep own interest of Belarusian producers	Creation of condition in the country, which will attract private foreign investment.

4. Politics of the Republic of Belarus.

4.1. Communism or democracy.

The most interesting questions appear while watching the development of events in the former Soviet Union: "What is going on in the country? Is it possible to name all changes during last four - five years as democratic changes? Or is it merely adaptation of the old regime to crises in economy and failure to win military and economic competition with the West?"

Here an attempt will be made to evaluate level of democratic development on the example of independent development of Belarus. It was mentioned already that Belarus atypical for the NIS country in the sense that there is no ethnic conflicts and, on one hand, it may not be easy to make the comparison of Belarus with other republics, but on the another hand, transitions in economy, politics, international relations are not shadowed with ethnic problems.

Let us consider the level of conservatism-democracy according to the scale defined in 1.3.1 and specified for every area of political development used for the analysis in Table 8 in 3.2.

4.1.1. *Forced sovereignty or..?*

What is possible to consider, first of all, as the most important political factor, which affects all areas of the policy. It is the main law of any country - the Constitution of

Belarus. According to the Constitution, which was shortly described in 2.1.2. and 2.1.4., the Republic of Belarus is an independent country. It was recognized as a sovereign state by almost all countries in the world and the most respectful international organization. Nobody can argue with this statement and no outside force, according international laws, can change it. However, analysis of the events shows that in Belarus two point of views coexist . First, as it shows in Table 8, the conservative view, which calls to the as closest union with Russia, and possibly including monetary, military and in other areas. The right wing of this view propagate the joining of Belarus to Russia as part of Russian Federation. A moderate part of the politicians calls for a economic union with Russia, excluding monetary or military. The democratic part wants equally beneficial relations from both the West and the East. They prefer the situation where nobody can dictate to the Belarusian government Russia or the European Union.

Let's consider the main political events from this point of view

1. The agreement about CIS, when Belarusian chairman Stanislau Shushkevich became one of initiator of this union. The CIS agreement, however, did not suppose to create an other Soviet Union and it was not a threat to the country's independence. Therefore, with the participation of Belarus it was possible to evaluate according to the scale as moderate development, because on one hand, it is not subordination of the country to the Russian Federation in any form, and on the other hand it is not equal partnership with Russia or Western countries.
(moderate)
2. As the result of political development, as it was discussed in 2.1. today Belarus

has signed a military or security union with Russia, but this agreement is not ratified yet and looks like it is not going to happen in near future. The reason - conditions on which Belarus can agree on such union do not satisfy the Russian requirements - Belarus has no intention to permit the Russian government to decide what military bases and where on the territory of Belarus Russia would have. It is also possible to refer as moderate development, because the agreement was signed by Belarusian parliament, but not in the form, which wanted conservators. (moderate)

3. Economic union with Russia.

- a. Monetary union. Again, Belarusian government is willing to have such agreement very much, but they still have no monetary union. The reason - conditions which Russia include in the corresponding document, that Russia will dictate the Belarusian financial policy. The head of National Bank of Belarus, Stanislauwas Bagdankevich, was able to prove that it was a threat for the sovereignty of the state. (moderate)
- b. A recent custom union is actually first working agreement with Russia on mutual economic issue. There are few points, as it is shown above, about the international trade, which is possible to define as a step back from independence. And today, it is sooner conservative agreement, because there is an item which define the creation of common foreign trade policy together with Russia. That means mainly that decisions will be made in Moscow, and this is restriction for independent Belarusian policy. However, this union began to work a few months

ago and it is not easy to evaluate it properly. **(moderate-conservative)**

4. Problems in the area of foreign policy are described above. Such foreign policy is hard to characterize as foreign policy of a respectful sovereign state. This is also a negative feature in the issue of independent existence of Belarus. However, it is still too much to evaluate this characteristic as only conservative, merely because up to date Belarus has weak, pro-Russian, but still independent foreign policy.

(moderate-conservative)

These few evaluations give a picture of politics which is possible to name as the moderate with a conservative trend. Contemporary Belarus is really an independent country but with the existence of tendency to pro-Russian policy and a small, but possible chance to lose its' sovereignty.

4.1.2. Democratic laws.

The Constitution again is the background of any legal activity in the country. It is necessary to note that the Constitution of Belarus itself gives all necessary basis for the creation and implementation of democratic laws.

However, if to consider available information from different sources, it is important to mention few points, which have been described already in 2.1.

1. The Constitution provides democratic principles of division of powers and an independent court system. The Constitutional Court is created to observe how any laws or actions of the government of other groups in the country are agreeing with the Constitution. It looks pretty nice and democratic, especially in the area

of the relationships between the executive and legislative branches of power. When the division of the power in the country leads the fact that the President Lukashenka and the Supreme Council prevent each other from concentration too much power in one's hands. This is real democratic development, especially if to compare with communist dictatorship during the Soviet years. **(democratic)**

2. The most democratic achievement, if to compare with previous communists years is democratic elections of a president, parliament and local government. It is necessary to note that by observers from other countries elections really named free competitive democratic election with equal opportunities for all candidates. Still, there is a negative feature, when the candidate, who has power before the elections, can have better access to mass-media, for example, but this problem not of democratic elections. **(democratic)**
3. However, there are few facts, which make this pretty democratic picture much darker.
 - a. First of all, it is possibility to use power for pressure on court or parliament to get unconstitutional political outcome. Once it has taken place, when Aleksander Lukshenka formulated questions for referendum on 14 May 1995. These questions were recognized as unconstitutional by the parliament and the Constitutional Court. Another time it was happened, when the President published antistrike decree, which was also recognized as unconstitutional, but which was active for few month. Today, however, the decree is invalid. This phenomena is hardly possible to name as a fully democratic development. **(moderate-conservative)**

- b. Second, the extent of governmental corruption. If government officials are not keeping law and order, how they can expect that a usual citizen will not do the same. Bribery is a widespread phenomena in Belarus today. It was admitted by parliament investigation. **(conservative)**
4. The existence of so called underlaw acts, which were traditional during the Soviet Union. It means that there is the Constitution, there are the laws and at the same time there are governmental official documents, which are devoted to interpretation of one or another specific issue, which is not discussed by the Constitution and the laws in details. Very often, this underlaw acts lead to a direct distortion of the main democratic laws. One of the specific examples will be discussed later in connection with privatization. **(conservative)**
5. And finally, there is very important notion about the real independence of the court system in Belarus. It really claimed to be independent. Appointment of judges from the top to the lowest positions do not depend on executive power. Still the situation is impossible to name absolutely independent, because the court system depend on executives with court buildings, with judges apartments, with some specific conditions in their lives as access to some extra benefits.

Overall, it is possible to see that Belarus has a democratic Constitution and democratic laws, democratically elected parliament and the President, but implementation is difficult. Some political development in this area is also possible to name a moderate, because conservative forces are trying to keep the democratic laws from democratic implementation, but the main laws are still democratic.

4.1.3. Human rights

Again, it is necessary to begin with a basic - with the Constitution. In the Constitution of Belarus it is possible to find all the regulations and provision about human and civil rights from Geneva Convention. Let's consider the facts, which only can show observance of these regulations in the country.

1. Freedom of press. If in the beginning of the independent history of the country publishing of a newspaper or magazine depended only on available amount of money, today the situation has changed already. It was mentioned, in literature review, a few very illustrative examples, when Lukashenko enforced the closing of opposition newspapers or applied censorship to some publication, when the progressive newspapers came out with white spots on their pages. This is hardly possible to see as a democracy and observance of freedom of press. It is a return to the old communist times. **(conservative)**
2. Rights on the peaceful demonstration or protest. The famous scandal with Lukashenko antistrike decree and the arrest of few representatives of free trade unions, which have caused vivid protests of international community. It is not the single example, it is only the most famous one. Again, it is possible to see the conservative type of political behavior. **(conservative)**
3. At the same time, in comparison with the most former Soviet republics, positive development of the observance of rights of ethnic minorities, such as citizenship, language, schools, and cultural development. Citizenship can get any person who lived on the territory of the republic for one year. Nationality is not included in a

new Belarusian passport, which is the main document for citizens. Nobody put an ethnic or language restriction in job application. Parents can choose the language of the secondary education and school for their children. In large cities, there is a variety of schools such as Polish, Russian, different religious communities.

(democratic)

4. People are free to express their religious beliefs and to visit the church or religious community of their choice. During the Soviet time, the state did not intervene in religious business, but open propagation of religious beliefs was forbidden by the communist ideology and religion activity was strongly restricted by the state regulations. **(democratic)**

These examples show the serious restrictions on such human rights as freedom of speech, press, and on the freedom of opposition, which are used today in Belarus. However, it is possible to describe human rights development as democratic in comparison with the communist past. Again, it comes sooner to the moderate development of policy in this area, because some facts and events are purely democratic and the other are typical for the old communist society - conservative.

4.1.4. Security

The security or defense issues were mentioned before. These issues are closely connected with sovereignty, which was discussed in 4.1.1., but they still have independent significance in the policy of the state.

1. Nuclear weapon - it is the most interesting issue for the outside world. In this

sense, everybody has an interest in the Belarusian approach to solution.

- a. Belarus claims itself the nuclear free state and military neutral. After the USSR race of armament it is without any doubt a democratic trend. **(democratic)**
 - b. Belarus signed the Lisbon Protocol and the Treaty START I about the transfer of Russian Federation or dismantling of strategic nuclear weapon. The largest part has been done already. Also the transfer of the army subordinate the Russian Federation to Russian territory has been done almost in full. Few tactical missiles and army which still are left on the territory, however, cause some trouble. In the Fall of 1995 the President Lukashenka ordered the stop of the transfer to Russia. Actually, his main motives were differences in attitude toward Ukraine waving nuclear weapons and attracting because of this attention of international community. The action of Lukashenko was not the action of a serious politicians. However, as the result of this action, it is not clear that Belarus today is already a nuclear free state or it will still have nuclear weapon inside its borders. Overall, the fact that Belarus shows serious intention to become nuclear free state and acts accordingly giving evidence of democratic approach to such important issue. **(democratic)**
2. The military union with Russia on the basis of CIS security agreement, as it was shortly mentioned in 4.1.1. which was signed by representative of the Supreme Council of Belarus is possible be treated as a conservative move, but it is necessary to remember that as it was mentioned in part 2.2. according to this agreement, only the parliament of Belarus has the right to decide it is possible to place any foreign (Russian) troops or equipment on the territory of Belarus. It is unsatisfactory to

the Russian military command and government that this agreement is still not ratified by the Russian Duma. Also it is important to note that this agreement did not suppose any joint military action on the territory either Russia, Belarus or any third country. **(moderate)**

3. The creation of the army of the Republic of Belarus, approved by the parliament of Belarus will have a number of servicemen reasonable for such a country as Belarus (10,000 officers corps and between 70,000 and 50,000 servicemen) and is intended to be used only for the protection of Belarus inside its borders. **(moderate)**
4. Military bases and equipment. However, pressure of events, the mostly economic nature and pressure of the Russian government led to a decision to permit Russia use equipment of two stations and one military base on the territory of Belarus for 25 years, which is step back from the intended neutrality. **(conservative)**

After the consideration of all these facts, it is possible to see that in comparison with the previous state, today Belarus is much more democratic in the sense of safety for the neighbors and the world and the presence of weapons and armies on its territory. It is possible to evaluate it as a moderate step forward to democratic development.

4.1.5. Foreign policy.

As it was described in 2.4. Belarus was recognized as an independent state by the international community, but it did not take active steps in its foreign policy, carrying relations with different states only occasionally not systemic base.

1. Belarus still has a few highly qualified diplomats, who can provide the necessary

relationships with international partners on the high level. The government takes steps to improve the situation, such as the creation of the Department of International Relations in the Belarusian State University, but such action will give results only in a long run. If there are changes, these changes are very slow.

(moderate)

2. It looks like many Belarusian officials still fear open relations with foreign countries, overestimating at the same time the importance of relationships with Russia. It is possible to see in the behavior of the President himself, when a few times on different occasions he repeated old communist formulas about capitalists spies or about the action of western intelligence service (about strike of transport workers). Such a point of view is impossible to scale as progressive or democratic.

(moderate-conservative)

3. Diplomatic relations with the main Western countries including Germany, the USA, England and other, participation in the International Organizations such as UN, UNICEF, IMF and others, the exchange of official visits of the President of the United States, Bill Clinton, of the Supreme Council, Stanislau Shushkevich, are possible to relate as the positive development in this area of policy. **(democratic)**

Actually, it is not easy to evaluate this area of Belarusian politics, because of the nonprofessional nature of the Belarusian foreign policy. There is development, but this development is going extremely slow and shows the intention to have foreign policy directed sooner to the East than to the West.

4.2. Command or market.

4.2.1. Market economy?

As it is recognized by everybody in the world including the former Soviet countries, communist style command centralized economy failed in the competition with the market capitalists economies. Also, it is widely known that to have a working economy it is necessary to change traditional Soviet economy to market one. It gives next characteristic of the country policy. The highly and successfully developed market typical for the democratic countries of the West. So it is possible to say that if the policy of Belarus transforms its economy to a market pattern, it is positive and democratic development. If it has very slow changes and stays practically centralized - then it is the conservative type of behavior.

1. The subsidies for industry were practically permanent during the last four years .

This measure, instead of hastening economic transformation, keeps the old Soviet style enterprises on their feet and strengthens their reliance on the center. The same is possible to tell about state and collective farms. Because of the reliance on the central government, the efficiency of work is very low. However, the last Program of the government on economic stabilization supposes that such subsidies will not be used any more and that finally the law on bankruptcy will be applied to industrial enterprises, which are not able to work without subsidies.

(moderate-conservative)

2. Inflation was up to 1000% per year in 1994. Last year, 1995, inflation dropped

significantly to the level of about 60 - 100% per year. That means the stabilization of the Belarusian currency relatively dollar value. However, it is necessary to note that it is not the stabilization of prices on the internal market of Belarus.

(moderate)

3. High taxes on industrial production. This government policy initially was intended to get more money from industry and business to cover government and social expenses. But taxes were unreasonably high. Such taxes, usually instead of money, are able to bring troubles with the absence of investment and decreasing of productions. Very high interest rates in credits distribution for independent businessmen and extremely favorable credit regime to state owned plant and factories, which made them not to work more efficiently, but to ask for more credits. Such economic policy led to 50% drop in industrial production, in comparison with the last year of the Soviet Union. Sure, it was possible to wait recession during such unprecedented transformation of economy. Mentioned above, the Program on stabilization supposes to cancel all favorable low interest governmental distributed credits, but the decreasing of interest rate for the rest of credits with the purpose to revive credit activity in the country. **(conservative)**
4. Government measures to protect the internal market with artificially kept low prices from neighboring countries led, instead of protection the market, to huge losses of raw material sources and markets for Belarusian production. **(conservative)**

These measures are possible to describe not as a transition to market, but as the

policy of support of old traditional type of production conservative type of policy.

4.2.3. *Where to find energy sources?*

It became clear from 2.5., that one of the largest economy problems in Belarus is the problem with energy. Where and how to find it, how to pay for it - these are vital questions for Belarus. Let's take a look on the action of government in this area of policy.

1. To buy oil and gas in Russia with prices lower than world prices. The government of Belarus with the purpose to get lower prices permitted to Russia to use practically free oil and gas pipelines connected Russia and Western countries. The price of transportation of one barrel of oil is three times cheaper than in neighbor Lithuania and four time less than in Poland. Practically the same is with railroads and roads transportation of Russian goods to the Western countries. Besides, the Belorussian government practically sell two the largest in European part of the former USSR refinery in Novopolatsk and Mosyr to the Russian government. Agreement on this topic tells about 50-50 split of ownership of this refineries. According to the calculations of independent economists from BNF, if to use this money directly it is absolutely possible to buy oil and gas with world prices on the world market and the policy of the government sooner speaks about conservatism and traditional mentality, when Belorussian government traditionally relied on Russian sources.

(conservative)

2. The absence of attempt to turn to nontraditional sources of energy. That is understandable on one hand, because the government has no money for large

projects, but it is always possible to make joint projects with France or Germany, as it was discussed above. **(conservative)**

3. Besides in the Belarusian press, a possible alternative projects were described. One of them, the most realistic, is building of an oil transportation sea port in Northern Poland on the basis of joint venture with Belarus. A corresponding agreement was signed by Poland and Belarus. Other similar enterprises with Ukraine on the Black sea are attempted, but this project did not get the recognition of Belarusian government. **(moderate)**

The energy policy is also possible to characterize sooner as a traditional or conservative rather than progressive or democratic in the policy development in Belarus.

4.2.3. Privatization.

One of the most important characteristics of the market economy is the level of privatization. It is impossible even to speak about market economy when all industry, farms, lands and forests are the state property. To create a market, it is necessary to abolish the state monopoly. To privatize industry and land.

1. The Constitution of the Republic of Belarus states on its pages that besides state and collective property, the same rights has any type of private property. But the Constitution does not specify what type of property can be private. It creates definite problems while the process of privatization occurs in the country. **(moderate)**

2. Industrial privatization began in Belarus in 1993. It was decided that privatization

would be a voucher - type. It will permit to those who was working there, to buy plant or factory to. This also will permit to create, according to the initial idea, a stock market in the country. However, in the beginning, as it is described in review of literature, attempts of privatization, as it appears, are much slower than it was supposed to be. Up to the end of 1995, only 10% of the industrial enterprises were privatized. This level is less than satisfactory for the quick transition to a market economy. **(moderate-conservative)**

2. Land privatization. The idea that the land can be bought and sold is still very hard to understand to the government of Belarus. As a result, the law about land privatization passed only in 1994, and it passed with serious restrictions. Favorable preference for buying land is for those people who are working in the agriculture today. The land with a square more then 1 hectare, which is not used for agriculture production, can be confiscated or resold. The amount of land which the usual citizen can buy with the purpose to build house or for other purposes besides productive, is restricted to 0.2 hectare. **(moderate-conservative)**

It is necessary to note that with the contemporary high prices on agriculture machinery and very low prices on agricultural production, including meat, milk and vegetables, there are very few farmers who take a risk of buying a large amount of land for production. Laws about private property on lands in the contemporary situation are not working as many good laws still need to be implemented in the country.

If to try to make the evaluation according scale, it is necessary to say that "yes", in comparison with situation during the USSR, there is significant progress in the laws on

private property. However, the implementation of these laws goes so slowly that it is possible to speak only about the conservative approach to this area of policy.

4.2.4. Foreign investment.

There is almost no data about the amount of foreign investment in Belarus, besides a few numbers in the Economic Bulletin of Europe. It is not easy to discuss this area of policy. Still, it is possible to tell that the political and economical risk of the unstable situation, financial policy such as nonconvertability of Belarusian currency, tax policy, when taxes are too high for any investment, absence of raw material as it is in Kazakhstan, difficulties with nomenclature bureaucratic local level of government hardly can lead to increase of foreign investment.

However, the last measures of the Program of stabilization with changes in financial and credit policy with state insurance policy for riskiness of business in the country with decreased tax level can possibly attract more investment. The future will have to show.

4.3. Conclusion.

As the overall conclusion of this analysis, it is possible to say that:

- The development of policy in the Republic of Belarus is possible to define as a development in the direction of democratic transformation of a postcommunist society towards a real democracy. Some characteristics of political life in Belarus, such as legal

developments - the Constitution, election laws, private property, privatization of industrial enterprises and lands, neutrality and the removal of nuclear weapons and the Russian troops from the territory of Belarus, shows a great democratic development.

- However, the extent of democratic transformation and specific political decisions of parliament and the government during years 1991 - 1995 is necessary to define as being conservative-moderate almost in any area of policy. The transformation in any area of politics is slow and forced by outside forces.

5. Forecast.

1. The main conclusion of the context analysis of available sources is that any changes in Belarus are slow and uncertain and political decisions and actions are possible to characterize as **moderate-conservative**. Together, with the described above personality of the president of the country, Alexander Lukashenko, and the distribution of political forces in the parliament, which were described in 2.1, it gives the picture of political decisions in any area of policy, which supposedly will be more conservative than democratic, but still with a slow movement toward further democratic transformation.
2. It is possible to recall from part 2.1 that political forces outside parliament and the government represented mainly by the weak and sparse political parties and trade unions, which by themselves are not able to create a real opposition to the government, it would be very plausible that the main affect on political life of Belarus will be on the government and parliament. Mainly the government and the Supreme Council will have the decisive voice in any political or economical issues, independent of popular opinion and support.
3. These two points can lead to closer relations with Russia, especially, when the next Presidential election in Russia is held with the the victory of the Russian communists, who, as they claim, care less about the economy and financial disagreements with Belarus and more about the renovation of the Soviet Union.
4. Overall, Belarus in the next few years, until the next presidential or parliamentary elections, will have less stable, less predictable policy than ever before with the tendency to form union with the Russian Federation and mostly conservative political solutions.

5. As for the development of the country after the year 2000, there are too many outside characteristics, which is necessary to take into account, such as development of events in Russia, relations of the Russian Federation with the Western countries, if the communists in Russia will win elections and so on.

However, it is necessary to note one difference between Belarus and the rest of Eastern European and NIS countries. If in Russia, after the relatively democratic rule of the President Yeltsin, the possibility that communists will be back, according to the similar scenario of events in Hungary and Poland, is very high. At the same time, in Belarus democrats never had power. Any changes in the country is impossible to name democratic in the sense that they were made by the representatives of nomenclature and old Soviet style Supreme Council. As the last presidential elections showed (part 2.1.), a candidate of the Communist Party got the least votes during the elections. However, communist faction in the parliament is the second after the nonpartisan deputies. There is a small possibility of the opposite to the Polish scenario of political development in Belarus, this will be left to the next elections in 1998 - 1999.

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