

## **The OUTCOME**

Of the Second International Scientific-Practical Conference “The history of trade in Belarus: the mastery of entrepreneurship on the consumer market”

November 21-22, 2015, Minsk, Belarus

The Second International Scientific-Practical Conference “The history of trade in Belarus” was held in Minsk, Belarus on November 21-22, 2015. The conference became an important event for the scientists who study trade, and an outcome of another stage in implementing the scientific project with the same title has been made. The History Of Trade Study Center of Menka company was the organizer of the conference.

The Organizing Committee received 57 applications for participation in the conference. After careful consideration of the reports' abstracts, they selected those presentation which were the most interesting, important and relevant to the topic of the conference. Among the participants invited to the conference, there were 33 scientists from Belarus, United Kingdom, Israel, Russia and Ukraine who were able to attend the scientific forum. Five more scientists from Kazakhstan, Poland, Russia and Ukraine sent their presentations for remote participation. Historians, archaeologists, anthropologists and economists were among the participants.

During the plenary session of the conference, James Davis (Belfast, UK) shared his experience gained in the historiography of Great Britain by studying trade of medieval England. The audience learned that their British colleagues conducted the research of commercialization of trade and its role in forming the consumer market and the capitalist economy; as well as they researched those market institutions that eased social explosions during the transition era to capitalism, the public opinion about trade, and the moral aspect of commercial activity. Zachar Shybieka (Tel Aviv, Israel) presented the results of his research on mastery of Jewish merchants of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in finding money for their activities. Andrei Kishtymov (Minsk) presented international, national and regional exhibitions as new trade tools in the XIX and early XX centuries. Andrei Foschan (Kharkiv, Ukraine) told about the contribution of Kharkiv State University of Food Technology and Trade and about its predecessor, the school of commerce, that trained professional traders for the Ukrainian market. Rustem Khaziev's (Ufa, Russia) topic of the scientific report was on the Russian historiography which reflected the desire of Russia's traders for new trade strategies in relation to post-Soviet Belarus.

The further work of the conference was split in three workshops by topics. The work of the first day continued with Workshop 1 dedicated to the topic of the main subject of the conference, the mastery of entrepreneurship on the consumer market. Ethnographers, Tatiana Volodina (Minsk) and Vladimir Lobach (Polotsk) raised a rare for the scientists topic of reflection of commercial activity in Belarusian folklore, and therefore the audience listened to their presentations with a great interest. Dmitry Petrov's (Mogilev) presentation dedicated to advertisements from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half to early XX century and Irina Kashtalyan (Minsk) about illegal trade in the BSSR in the 1980s caused very lively reactions.

Interesting presentations were made by Yuliya Yarmak (Grodno) about the personality of a Jewish merchant in the Russian Empire and by Irina Vavreniuk (Brest), about a typical Jewish merchant in Western Belarus. Irina Shandra (Vinnitsa, Ukraine) told how Belarusian and Ukrainian merchants developed their experience in a new kind of trade at commodity exchanges. Such a specific situation during the war period was not left behind either. Andrei Cherniakovich,

(Grodno) was able to collect some special material about a *homo commercial* in the conditions of the war between Soviet Russia and Poland 1919-1920.

Generally, the first day of the conference was very fruitful. The organizers and the speakers were able to pay attention of all participants of the conference at the importance of the study of trade through people's activities on the market and first off all through their mastery in sales and in buying goods as well. The working day of the conference ended with attending the exhibition called "Belarusian trade on the scales of history" held in the National Historical Museum of the Republic of Belarus, where the scientific concept was developed by the History Of Trade Study Center.

The second day of the conference consisted of two workshops. At Workshop 2, General questions of the history of trade, Nikolai Krivaltsevich (Minsk), Sergei Tarasov (Minsk), Oleg Dernovich (Minsk), Yury Bokhan (Minsk), Sergei Sergachev (Minsk), Valentina Lebedeva (Gomel), Tatiana Buyevich (Vitebsk), Alexander Subotin (Vitebsk), and Elena Sumko (Novopolotsk) gave their presentations. All speakers paid their attention at the origin and development of trading activity in Belarusian lands. They raised the issues which caused active debates. How did exchange become trade and when did money turned from the simple decoration the equivalent of the exchange and trade (N. Kryvaltsevich)? When did a craftsman become a seller of his products and when did trade begin to feed producers (S. Tarasov, Y. Bokhan)? What were the reasons of trade decline in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in XIV - first half of the XV century. (O. Dernovich)? When did a regular exchange between the country and the towns begin, and when did the consumer market form and became a profitable activity (Y. Bokhan)? How acceptable was the state trade in the first years of Soviet power in Belarus (T. Buyevich)? Why was the Civil War accompanied by Russian-Ukrainian trade war in 1918, and what kind of results did it cause for the Belarusian consumer market (V. Lebedeva)? How to explain the patience of the BSSR's population during the post-war shortages of goods and endless Bolshevik experiments in the economics (E. Sumko)? Which channels were used to influenced the architecture of shopping facilities in Belarus via implementing the Tsarist laws of XIX century (S. Sergachev)?

The following speakers took part in Workshop 3 called "Factors of influence on trade and various kinds of trade activity": Emmanuel Ioffe (Minsk), Inna Sorkina (Grodno), Irina Gribko (Minsk), Olga Sobolevskaya (Grodno), Arthur Kukharenko (Minsk), Larisa Lavreenko (Brest), Elena Tretiak (Dzerzhinsk), Irina Makhovskaya (Minsk), Gennady Ridevskiy (Mogilev). This workshop was also interesting and fruitful. They discussed the important issues such as the unification of weights and measures in the trade of Belarus at the end of XVIII - first half of XIX century. (I. Sorkina), the regulation of trade by city councils in XIX - early XX century (I. Gribko), the legal framework for the development of trade in Western Belarus (L. Lavreenko), adaptive consumer tactics during the commercial crisis of the 1990s. (I. Makhovskaya), peculiarities of regional consumer markets in modern Belarus (G. Ridevsky) and others.

During the second day of the conference included presentations of scientific publications. Zachar Shybieka and Ratsibor Biahun presented the first annual scientific edition, titled "Transactions of the History of Trade Study Center". British historian James Davis told about his monograph, *Medieval Market Morality: life, law and ethics in the English marketplace, 1200-1500*. He is the first author in the European historiography who addresses moral and ethical aspects of medieval trade. He showed a possibility of honest trade even at the stage of its formation because traders had to think not only about their profits but about their reputations as well, and such features were also played a role of a some kind of capital.

At the final session of the conference, the moderators of the workshops, Andrei Kishtymov, Tatiana Buevich and Emmanuel Ioffe, and the Chairman of the conference organizing committee Zakhar Shybieka also spoke. Larisa Lazarevich, the CEO of company Menka, appealed to the conference participants with a fiery speech filled with patriotism and a belief in the success of the next phase of the History of Trade in Belarus Research Project.

The Second Scientific conference dedicated to the topic the history of trade in Belarus and organized with the support of Menka company was important for the Belarusian historical science. Previously, in Belarus, they had never conducted any scientific forums devoted to the study of trade, and especially to its such specific and important issue as mastery of traders in the consumer market.

All conditions for experience exchange were created at the conference between Belarusian and foreign specialists as well. During the conference it became clear that the Belarusian researchers were ready to tackle complex and specific issues of the history of trade in Belarus. Many of them successfully work in the development of such historic areas as oral history, anthropological history and the history of microeconomics, which are essential to the reconstruction of mastery and skills in trading activity.

The Organizing Committee thanks all the participants for their active cooperation. The presentations and reports will be published in 2016 in the 2nd edition of the "Transactions of the History Of Trade Study Center" and they will become an important contribution to the historiography of the economic history of Belarus.

**Organizing Committe**