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On 26 January 2018 a famous scholar, a talented educator and an organizer of scientific research, doctor of science in history, professor Aliaxandr Sharapa celebrated his 80th anniversary.

He devoted considerable effort to the creation and development of the national research school of history and current problems of international relations which was formed on the basis of the department of international relations and later of the faculty of international relations of Belarusian State University. As a result, Belarus got its own research and educational centre to instruct and train highly qualified personnel for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other institutes of the international activities of the young Belarusian state. In 2017, the department of international relations marked its 25th anniversary, and the research and pedagogical results of its work were highly appreciated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus.

Aliaxandr Sharapa was born on 26 January 1938 in the village of Hodorovtsy of the Lida powiat of the No-

vogrudok province of Poland (now it is the Lida district of the Grodno region of Belarus). After his graduation from the Minsk State Pedagogical Institute named after A. M. Gorky in 1960, he started to work as a teacher-educator in the Vileika secondary special school. Then he held various positions at the district, regional and republican bodies of the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic state administration. In 1973 he was sent to study at the postgraduate program of the High Party's School named after K. Marx of the Central Committee of the ruling Socialist Unity Party of Germany in Berlin, where in 1976 he successfully defended his thesis on the methodological issues of the education of the party and governmental employees in the German Democratic Republic. His elaboration of the research into that issue led to his habilitation in 1988. In the same year he became the first Belarusian researcher in history who was awarded the title of full professor abroad.

Aliaxandr Sharapa has worked at Belarusian State University since 1982, when he was appointed vice-rec-

tor for international relations and coordinated the education of foreign students from more than a hundred countries. In September 1992 on his initiative, the department of international relations was established. Moreover, he started the preparation for the creation of the special faculty of international relations demanded by the realities of the early years of the Republic of Belarus independence as an appropriate institute for the education of highly qualified specialists who could work in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and diplomatic missions.

Professor Sharapa headed the department of international relations for 23 years (from 1992–2015) and was the head of the faculty of international relations, created on 1 October 1995, for 13 years (1995–2008). In those years, a modern system of education of international relations specialists in six different directions provided by more than 200 educators and 40 employees of 13 departments was established. Under the guidance of professor Sharapa a basic professional course “History of International Relations” was developed and a textbook on this discipline in four parts was published. He also created and implemented his special course “Germany, Austria and Switzerland: Political Systems and Foreign Policy”.

On 31 October 1996, professor Sharapa was awarded “The Medal of Francisk Skorina” by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus for outstanding research and pedagogical merits. He is also the Honored Worker of Education of the Republic of Belarus (2004) and has an honorary degree “The Excellence in Education” (1998), a number of honorary diplomas of the Ministry of Education, diplomas of the Council of Ministers, the State Committee on Science

and Technology, the High Attestation Commission of the Republic of Belarus, and other awards. Professor Sharapa is a member of the Council of the Belarusian State University, the Commission for awarding the Prize named after V. I. Picheta, the Board of the Belarusian Association of the BSU Veterans, as well as the vice-president of the Belarusian Association of Political Sciences. He was the chairman of the Council for the defense of the doctoral dissertations for 23 years.

Under his academic supervision 16 dissertations in historical sciences including three doctor’s dissertations were defended successfully, as well as a number of research projects in the framework of the Belarusian fundamental and applied scientific programs were implemented. During the realization of one of them, the publication of a multi-volume collection of documents and materials on the history of the foreign policy of Belarus was started for the first time. Overall, professor Sharapa has written more than 120 research works with the total volume of more than 400 pages, including three monographs and a number of textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education. Some papers were translated in German and published in Germany and Austria. Professor Sharapa lectured at the conferences in Belarus, Russia, Germany, Austria, Poland, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia.

The faculty of international relations and the Journal of the Belarusian State University sincerely congratulate professor Aliaxandr Sharapa on his 80th anniversary and wish him further research and pedagogical achievements and new fruitful results!

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