

Reviews

BOOK REVIEWS

SOUČASNA SOVETSKA LITERATURA III: UKRAJNSKA A BELORUŠKA (Soviet Contemporary Literature p. III: Ukrainian and Byelorussian), Vaclav Žydlický, Zinaida Genyk-Berezovska, "Svet Sovetu", Praha 1966 (In Czech).

This is the third volume of the series "Contemporary Soviet Literature." The first two volumes deal with Russian prose and poetry. The section on Byelorussian literature (pp. 135-230) was written by Vaclav Žydlický, a lecturer at the Charles University in Prague.

The author begins with a brief survey of the *Naša Niva* period after 1905 when, thanks to writers such as Janka Kupała, Jakub Kołas, Zmitrok Biadula, Aleš Harun and in particular Maksim Bahdanovič, Byelorussian literature began to lose its 'folklore' character and acquire a form which was both classical and modern. After the October Revolution, in the early twenties, Byelorussian literature entered into a period of vigorous development, not only quantitatively but qualitatively speaking. In particular the Byelorussian novel emerged in the form of works by Čiška Hartny, Jakub Kołas, Micheš Zarecki, Zmitrok Biadula, and reached its peak in the works of Kužma Corny. The so-called 'Stalin period' in the thirties has not been sufficiently studied and "the damage done to literature by the personality-cult has not been properly brought to light. In the case of Byelorussian literature this damage must be specially stressed, for its sufferings were particularly great, perhaps greater than those of other national literatures of the Soviet Union" (p. 145). However nothing was entirely negative even in those difficult times: the thirties gave to Byelorussian literature such outstanding poets as Arkadž Kulašoŭ and Pimiën Pančanka.

In his study of present-day Byelorussian literature Žydlický first briefly surveys the state of literary criticism in Byelorussia. He speaks appreciatively of the school of young critics, represented by Aleš Adamovič, Sciapan Aleksandrovič, Viktor Kavalenka, with whom one may group such

critics of the older generation as Ryhor Biarozkin and Uładzimir Kallešnik. He notes however that the work of Byelorussian critics often suffers from a lack of aesthetic criteria (p. 152).

Byelorussian prose of the immediate post-war period was dominated by the war novel, in which persons and events assumed heroic proportions, bordering on legend and fantasy. However "in such a narrowly defined statement of the heroic theme the chief vehicle of heroism — man and his inner world — was completely lost" (p. 155). In a reaction against this trend, the newer war writers — Ivan Navumienka, Vasil Bykaŭ — began to "demonumentalise" the war-theme: "It is man in the war first and foremost that holds the interest of all present-day prose. And not so much his actions, as his psychology" (ibid.).

The "production" novel — which may be considered the peace-time equivalent of the heroic war-theme, — had scant success in post-war Byelorussia. Instead, writers like Mielež, Bryl, Navumienka and Karpiuk have turned their attention to the past, to the days of their youth. Their hero is usually a young man, endowed with many of the author's personal traits, "not in the sense that the authors wrote the story of their lives, but in the sense that they rely on their autobiographical experience, on the things they had encountered or seen, and also on judgments which were not necessarily their own but which they had made part of their spiritual autobiography" (p. 159). Žydlický sees the reason for this in the fact that "present-day literature is fearful of the sins of the past and is suspicious of anything which is unknown to the author from his personal experience. And the young man is a figure intimately known to the writer. It is through him and *with him* that

he may best explore and represent the world" (ibid.). The significance of this method lies in the fact that through it Byelorussian prose opens up new horizons: "Through autobiographical material young writers examined themselves and their creative possibilities. Therefore whenever the authors used this method they succeeded in creating something of permanent value, even if it meant going back for the most part to a period of time remote from the present day. With each succeeding step, however, the theme comes nearer to present-day internal problems. It is therefore a sort of tactical retreat to the starting point prior to a fresh attack" (p. 160).

The "autobiographical" novel is not an end in itself, but only a preparation for a step forward. Such a step Zydlicky sees in the novel *Serca na datoni* (The Heart in the Palm of Your Hand, publ. 1963) by Ivan Šamiakin. It is a work dealing with a theme which is thoroughly contemporary and devoid of any autobiographical element. Zydlicky considers Šamiakin to be a worthy successor of the greatest Byelorussian pre-war novelist Kužma Čorny.

In present-day Byelorussian literature, prose predominates, and in this it contrasts with the Ukrainian experience. However in the field of poetry there have also been new developments, even in the works of older poets such as Piatruš Broŭka and Maksim Łužanin. Both of them began to write in the twenties, but "no sooner had they outgrown their swaddling bands, than their wings were clipped" (p. 165). Their poetry has always had a pronouncedly "social" character, and so it has remained until the present day. However "in recent times, their social tendency has acquired an almost artistic intensity; it has ceased to be a versified thesis, but has become an integral part of the author's lyrical ego" (ibid.). The changes that have been taking place in Byelorussian poetry are particularly evident in the recent works of Arkadž Kulašoŭ, "one of the greatest poets in the whole Soviet Union" (p. 166). His talent "requires a great subject, a drama, a tragedy; it is not by chance that his greatest success was in representing man in a 'ballad' situation, where he seems to be completely lost, yet does

not cease to be a man" (p. 168). Kulašoŭ's greatest work was the poem *Sciah bryhady* (The Banner of the Brigade) written in 1943. His next works, *Novaje rečyšča* (The New River Bed, written in 1951) with its "production" theme, and the "rhyming chronicle" *Hroznaja pušča* (The Stern Forest, written in 1956) cannot be called a success. For a few years Kulašoŭ was silent. Then in 1961 there appeared in the literary journal *Pohymia* selections from his new book, which revealed "a completely new Kulašoŭ: the author of small lyrical poems, completely introspective, quiet and in places striking a minor key" (p. 167). This gave rise to talk about the poet's crisis. However "there is no reason to consider the present-day 'crisis-stricken' Kulašoŭ to be inferior to his former self. As a poet he certainly did not lose anything. He only feels in an acute and personal way the changing times and seeks guidance from his innermost emotions" (p. 168). In this he is at one with the whole of present-day Byelorussian poetry in particular, and Soviet poetry in general, which "has ceased to be a marching fanfare, and has learned how to be quiet and reflective" (p. 169).

Writing of the works of the young poets who have made their literary debut in the last decade or so, Zydlicky, after enumerating some twenty names, continues thus: "The young poets do not form any school. The only thing they have in common is that each one is different from the others. And all of them deliberately separate themselves from the declarative poetry of the immediate post-war period. Their description of life is based on real facts, on concrete happenings... Just as in prose, the lyrical hero is often a young man with many autobiographical traits. Yet, in contrast to prose, he is a thoroughly contemporary, active member of the society... He wants to be everywhere, so during the vacations he visits the virgin soil reclamation projects, or goes to work on new construction sites, but in the end he is glad to come back home, to his native village, among his own people" (p. 170).

Among the young poets to achieve distinction is Ryhor Baradulin (b. 1935) whose poetry, "mainly on social themes, but warmed by the poet's lyrical subjectivism, is a synthesis of

the attitude of a generation, whose early childhood was passed in cruel war conditions, bringing them to maturity before their time and teaching them to look at the truth without the aid of any rose-coloured glasses" (p. 171).

Another outstanding poet, not sufficiently appreciated according to Żydlicky, is Uładzimir Karatkievič (b. 1930), who is also a distinguished prose writer. Whereas Baradulin's poetry enchants one with its imagery, that of Karatkievič is full of deep reflexion. "He is a born philosopher" (p. 172).

New Byelorussian prose is "on the whole much more mature than the new poetry" (p. 174).

Alaksiej Karpiuk has earned well-deserved fame for his novel *Danuta* (Danuta, a girl's name; published in 1960). It is the story of love between a poor Byelorussian peasant boy, struggling to gain an education and keep alive in pre-war Vilna, and the daughter of a Polish general. In his second novel, *Puščanskaja adyseja* (The Forest Odyssey; publ. 1964) Karpiuk returns to the war-theme.

The young writer Barys Sačanka (b. 1936) in his short stories "tries to explore the 'ethical man' through small miniatures and psychological studies... We do not find in his stories any tense situations or thrilling plots. The author talks simply about simple things" (p. 176). Similar to Sačanka is Viačeslaŭ Adamčyk (b. 1933) who chooses for the subject of his stories "those psychological 'critical' moments, in which human consciousness reaches its breaking point, and man acquires a new knowledge, which imperceptibly enriches him in fresh spiritual values" (p. 177).

Somewhat different from the previous two is the talent of Michas Stralcou (b. 1937). The hero of his story is usually a man, lost in the modern technological age. "Stralcou touches the essential parts of the modern man. It is not by chance that his hero is always in modern city surroundings, which with its tempo of life is the chief cause of his 'alienation.' Stralcou ... examines the moments which show how the present-day world, with its rapid tempo of hitherto unseen technological progress, breaks through the sensitive sphere of human existence... and how man defends himself against technological call-

ousness by turning his gaze towards nature" (p. 180).

While Stralcou is essentially lyric, the main traits of the talent of Ivan Ptašnikaŭ (b. 1932) are epic. In his works he draws a picture of the post-war Byelorussian village. "It may be said that the picture of the present-day Soviet village in Byelorussian literature was incomplete until Ptašnikaŭ. He represents the village in all its 'nakedness', stressing polemically the negative sides. It is in this connection that certain voices were raised saying that Ptašnikaŭ's pictures were 'non-typical' and accusing him of falling under the influence of naturalism" (p. 181). The fact remains that Ptašnikaŭ's talent was the one that baffled the critics most. Some see in him an impressionist, others a lyricist in prose, still others find in his works an affinity with the *Burapiena* (Stormy Foam) trend in the Byelorussian literature of the twenties. Żydlicky himself compares him with Žmitrok Biadula and the early Lynkoŭ (a talented but very much 'establishment' writer who began to write in the twenties), noting however that Ptašnikaŭ begins where Lynkoŭ left off.

Finally there is the talented writer Uładzimir Karatkievič whose great merit lies in cultivating the little-developed genre of the historical novel. In his works, however, "he does not describe great historical events, neither does he portray any celebrities... His heroes are unknown to history, almost or completely fictitious (with the exception of Kastuś Kalinoŭski... who is the main hero of the novel *Kalasy pad siarpom tvaim* (The Ears of Corn under Your Sickle, in *Polymia* Nos. 2-6, 1965). Nevertheless they are real heroes. They are people who know what they want and who can in the most difficult circumstances resist and remain true to their own selves. 'Unbroken personalities and complete characters, whose life is one single chord in which there is no false note', as the author himself wrote of one of them. And this is what interests Karatkievič. Never history as such" (p. 183). The historicism of Karatkievič may be called philosophical, and that is the reason why he can move so freely from the historical past to the present day. In fact "his historical novels are in many respects more modern than many

other works which have modern life for their theme" (p. 183).

In comparison with prose and poetry, the development of the Byelorussian theatre lags behind. The chief reason for this state of affairs, Żydlicky sees in the "simplicistic, primitive concept of the educational role of the work of art" (p. 192). That is why there are still in Byelorussia a great number of small, one-act plays, destined mostly for amateur production and pursuing didactic and propaganda aims. "The direct orientation towards educational value can be seen in works in which the authors aspire to create something of artistic value. The creative artistic element in such cases recedes into the background" (p. 192). Żydlicky illustrates his statement by analysing the plays *Vyhnannie bludnicy* (The Expulsion of a Sinful Woman, written in 1960) by Ivan Samiakín, and *Luboŭ, Nadzieja, Viera* (Love, Hope, Faith, written in 1960) by Piotr Vasileŭski. Another weakness of the Byelorussian theatre is the authors' "insufficient stress of the creative development of dramatic characters" (p. 195). This was the main fault of the play *Ludzi i djably* (Men and Devils, 1958) by Kandrát Krapiva. It has all the ingredients necessary for a good play, but the author failed to use them to the best advantage.

Byelorussian comedy fared somewhat better with two plays *Vybačajcie, kali laska* (Pray, Excuse Us, 1953) and *Lavonicha u arbiecie* (Lavonicha in Orbit, 1961) by Andrej Makajonak.

The last six chapters are each dedicated to the work of an individual writer — Janka Bryl, Vasil Bykaŭ, Ivan Mielež, Ivan Navumienka and the poets Pimien Pančanka and Maksim Tank respectively.

Janka Bryl (b. 1917) comes from western Byelorussia which until 1939 was under Polish occupation. He has published several books since 1946, most of them being collections of short stories. According to Żydlicky "Bryl's talent is essentially *lyrical*. Epic objectivity takes second place with him, whereas subjective emotions are well to the fore. During the last decade he seems to have conceived his works as one lyrical monologue made up of many parts" (p. 202). In 1963 there appeared Bryl's long novel *Ptuški i hniozdy* (Birds and Nests) which is "a most noteworthy work. Intensely autobiographical (it tells of

the emotional and intellectual progress of a young man taken prisoner of war in Germany, whence he eventually escaped), the novel gives one an insight into the author's 'creative laboratory'... It is concerned with fundamental ethical problems and captures one with the polyphony of its composition, enhanced by the interweaving of three time periods (the hero-author in a guerilla camp... tells a girl typist of his experiences as a prisoner of war and at the same time continuously remembers his native home and lives with his memories of childhood and youth)... One thing is sure: it is not a novel in the strict sense of the word, but a kind of poem in prose, a continuation of the author's lyrical monologue, yet another excursion 'on the road into the light' as Bryl himself says, but understood in a much wider sense than hitherto and aspiring to a definite synthesis" (p. 203).

War made a writer out of Vasil Bykaŭ (b. 1924) and at the same time provided him with such an abundance of material, that it has become his main — almost his only, — theme. However he is not interested in war as such: "What interests him is primarily *man in war* and, secondly, war as a senseless human tragedy" (p. 206). Bykaŭ's works are characterised by a dramatic tension, which he achieves "not through tense action, but by the dramatisation of emotions, rooted in contact with full-blooded human characters. Bykaŭ deliberately restricts the action in his even larger prose works to a narrow time period of one day's or night's duration, and places his heroes in a situation bordering on life and death, usually ending in death. This method enables him to strip down his characters in the most complete manner, for it is in critical moments that the hidden inner human self reveals itself to its fullest extent. In this way he achieves his aim: to represent war through the dialectics of the human soul" (p. 206). A hero of one of Bykaŭ's novels once observed: "War can teach you many things, but the price is too high to pay." This, according to Żydlicky, is the underlying idea of all Bykaŭ's work. These works include the novels *Zuraŭliny kryk* (The Cry of the Cranes, 1960), *Zdroda* (Treason, 1962), *Trecijaja Rakiet* (The Third Rocket, 1962) and *Alpijskaja bałada* (Ballad of the Alps 1964). Żydlicky is quite optimistic

about Bykaŭ's future as a writer and notes appreciatively that, in spite of the author's restricted theme, he never repeats himself and is never dull.

Ivan Mielež (b. 1921) began as a writer of war stories, and his earlier works — including his best known novel *Minski napramak* (The Direction Minsk, 1952), — did not differ from other works of a similar kind written in the early post-war period. In 1962 however there appeared his new novel *Ludzi na balocie* (People in the Marshes) which became at once a huge success. Voices were heard proclaiming that in this novel Mielež revealed himself in a completely new light, quite unlike his former self. In this book the author "turned back to the period after the October Revolution — to his childhood... in order to examine Byelorussian country life on the eve of the transformation of the Soviet village (i. e. the collectivisation of farms — *A. N.*) It is a well-worn theme, but only apparently non-contemporary: the past is the father of the present, it is the birth of today" (p. 213). As to his method, Mielež "did not chose the well trodden path of an *a priori* construction, founded on the assumption that, in order to represent reality, the writer must take the readymade background of the period and people it with typical characters. On the contrary, he (Mielež) turns these normative assumptions upside down and evokes that period with its social problems as from the inside, from the experiences and attitudes of his heroes. He does not illustrate, but passes judgment on the period and the people through the medium of persons intimately understood... He is true to the logic of his characters, and this is why a young couple such as Vasil Dziacieł and Hanna Čarnuška do not act like puppets in the hands of some experienced manipulator, but often seem to develop a will of their own despite the author's intentions..." (ibid.).

In Žydlicky's view "Mielež ... is an epic writer of the traditional, encyclopaedic type. He conceives his plots in such a way that they are capable of branching out widely, and enable him to paint the broadest picture possible" (p. 214).

Ivan Navumienka (b. 1925), author of the novel *Sasna pry darozie* (The Pine Tree by the Road, 1962) and a few other novels and collections of

short stories, is considered to be a war writer. This is only partially true. His main theme is youth tragically caught in the war. The pathos of Navumienka's works brings him close to Bykaŭ, yet the two authors attain their aims by different means: "In his review of Bykaŭ's *The Third Rocket* Navumienka said: 'To write about war in my opinion is not to paint portraits of human characters, but to recreate the unique atmosphere of the time,' (p. 217). For Navumienka the time was "the period of occupation, when the Soviet army had retreated, leaving the population wondering and perplexed; when Navumienka's Ciškas and Peters wandered through the streets and looked with stunned eyes at the new order, and felt uneasy because of the deadly silence reigning in their occupied town, a silence which could not even be broken by the sound of accordion music in the park inviting people to dance — a way in which the new authorities attempted to create an appearance of normal life. With an understanding of the mentality of that age group, the author gradually and convincingly directs his heroes towards a decision not to sit doing nothing. He makes no allowances and any false heroism is foreign to him" (p. 217). Navumienka does not bring forward new facts, but offers a new interpretation of reality "trying to achieve it from inside, from a psychological points of view... This ... brings freshness into Navumienka's prose and also explains why it was given such a favourable reception. However the author's style of writing and his language also have something to do with it" (p. 218).

In Žydlicky's opinion, Navumienka, in contrast to Bykau, has already exhausted the war theme *per se*, because his works rely on the autobiographical factor more than any other author's.

The poet Pimien Pančanka (b. 1917) is "a contemporary of the October Revolution." He began to write in 1938 and has since published several collections of poems. He has never claimed to be a deep thinker or sociological analyst, but has "merely sung a young hymn of praise in honour of life. And he captivates one with the strength and directness of his feelings, with his lyrical qualities" (p. 222). Even today, Pančanka, unlike Tank, is not a philosophical, but rather a sensit-

ive poet: "He never embarks on expeditions into domains where strict reasoning and an exact intellectual analysis are required. He allows the world to act first on his senses and then gives a judgment based on his emotional feelings" (p. 223). Pančanka's poetry "contains elements of pathos, but there is no trace of rhetoric" (ibid.).

Maksim Tank (pseudonym of Aūhieš Skurko, b. 1912) lived in western Byelorussia under Polish occupation until 1939. From early youth he took part in clandestine Communist party activities, for which he was arrested and sentenced to a term of imprisonment by the Polish authorities. He began to write poems in 1932. Tank's poetry was from the beginning social and revolutionary in character and could be defined as "political lyrics" (p. 226). Thus when in 1939 western Byelorussia was united with the eastern part within the boundaries of the Byelorussian Soviet Republic, there was no need for Tank to change his attitude. After the war Tank "fell under the influence of dogmatic aesthetics. For a poet committed as he was, this threatened to transform his poetry into pompous rhetoric. He was saved from this fate by his rich knowledge of life and past experience of a tribune accustomed to work with concrete material" (p. 226).

The most striking feature of Tank's present-day poetical works are "a hitherto unseen widening of his poetical horizons from a thematic point of view, as well as in a sense of depth and emotional and intellectual content" (p. 227). His travels abroad — to America, China and Western Europe, — had a beneficial effect on his poetry: "Tank the single-minded tribune has disappeared, and in his place a lyricist was born. He is concentrating more and more on human feelings. This intimate element in his poetry is stronger today than ever before ... The lyricism and the intimacy of Tank's present-day poetry has not diminished its social value. On the contrary, his recent poems on social themes have gained proportionately in intensity as they have acquired

more human aspects, that is to say when the ideological categories have been abandoned in favour of moral values" (p. 229).

Žydlicky's work is the first of its kind by a non-Byelorussian. His extensive knowledge of his subject, and his remarkable grasp of essentials have enabled him to create a comprehensive picture of present-day Byelorussian literature within rather limited space. It is necessary to say at once that this picture is highly individual. In assessing the literary values of works of specific authors and in his attempt to trace the general trend of development of Byelorussian literature, Žydlicky applied aesthetical principles which often differed from those on which the Byelorussian critics base their judgments. This is what makes his book interesting and stimulating.

The best chapters in Žydlicky's work are those on prose, and those giving monographs on individual authors. It is not clear why he considers Aleš Adamovič to be a Byelorussian writer. This talented literary critic writes novels in Russian and it would surely be more logical to deal with them in a book on Russian literature. The rich but controversial talent of Ivan Ptasnikau seems to have baffled not only Byelorussian critics, but also Žydlicky. The comparison with Biadula and Lyńkoū do not provide much help in understanding his forcible — one would like to say ruthless, — art of depicting human characters.

The chapter on new Byelorussian poetry is perhaps the weakest part of the whole book. A mere enumeration of names hardly does justice to the many fine original young authors of talent.

These are minor points, however. On the whole the author has succeeded in producing an excellent and valuable work. Those who know nothing of Byelorussian literature cannot fail to take an interest in this subject after reading Žydlicky, whereas the initiated will find in this book an abundance of food for thought.

HISTORYJA BIELARUSKAJ SAVIECKAJ LITARATURY (History of Byelorussian Soviet Literature). Edited by V. Barysienka and V. Ivašyn. Vol. 2, Minsk 1966.

This is the second volume of the History of Byelorussian Soviet Literature, prepared by the Janka Kupala Institute of Literature of the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences. It covers the period from 1941 until 1964. The first volume, dealing with the literature during the years 1917-1940 and published in 1965, was not available for review. However, the two volumes are practically independent of one another and may be read separately. The work has been produced by a team of Byelorussian literary critics and historians under the general editorship of V. Barysienka and V. Ivašyn.

The first three chapters of this second volume of the *History* are introductory and deal with the general development of Byelorussian literature during the period in question, the first chapter dealing with the wartime literature (1941-45), the second with the literature of the immediate post-war period (1946-53), while the third discusses new literary trends in the decade 1954-64. Each of these chapters contains separate sections on prose, poetry and drama. The next ten chapters contains separate sections on works of individual writers and poets. Authors thus singled out include Michaš Łyńkoŭ, Piatruš Broŭka, Piatro Hlebka, Pilip Piestrak, Arkadž Kulašoŭ, Maksim Tank, Pimien Pančanka, Janka Bryl, Ivan Šamiakin and Ivan Mielež.

The sections on the general development of contemporary prose, written by the literary critic Aleš Adamovič, are by far the best and most valuable part of the whole book. The author has combined a wide knowledge and sound aesthetic principles with a gift for clear exposition. Rather than lose himself in a mass of names and descriptive details, he chooses to concentrate on those basic literary processes which are characteristic of present-day Byelorussian prose, illustrating them with examples from the works of a few but carefully chosen authors. It is a little unfortunate — though perhaps understandable, — that the writers selected by him are often those whose works are also dealt with in special monographs (Bryl, Šamiakin, Mielež). The result

is not so much a repetition, as the fact that no room is left for more than a passing mention of younger writers such as Uładzimir Karatkievič, Viačasłaŭ Adamčyk, Ivan Ptašnikaŭ Michaš Stralcoŭ and some others. This is a pity, for these authors are as much part of the present-day Byelorussian literary scene as their older colleagues. On the other hand one reads with great interest Adamovič's short but penetrating survey of the work of Vasil Bykaŭ, Ivan Navumienka, A. Kułakoŭski and M. Łupsiakoŭ.

The sections on the development of modern Byelorussian drama by M. Jaroš are also well written, even if they only succeed in revealing a somewhat uninspiring scene. The sections on poetry on the other hand (author M. Barstok) tend to be superficial and often degenerate into a mere enumeration of names and titles. One can hardly hope to gain from this any clear picture of modern Byelorussian poetry or of the work of any particular poet.

Among the monographs, the best is no doubt that dealing with the writer Janka Bryl, also written by Aleš Adamovič. Chapters on the poet Pimien Pančanka (author V. Ħapava), and prose-writers Ivan Šamiakin (author A. Siemianovič) and Ivan Mielež (author V. Zuraŭloŭ) are also of interest. However, after reading the monographs one is left with a feeling that literary merit was not always the only reason for the choice of a given author. This is particularly true of the writer Michaš Łyńkoŭ and the poets Piatruš Broŭka and Piatro Hlebka. The monographs on those authors occupy 100 pages — one fifth of the whole text of the book. All three of them are very much "establishment" figures, and for the past forty years have given unconditional support to the official policies pursued by the authorities at any given time. If one removes all politics from their works, there is hardly anything left of their literary heritage. Today they play an important role in the cultural life in the Byelorussian SSR and all kinds of honours, decorations and titles are heaped upon them. Piatrus Broŭka has even been awarded the

exalted title of People's Poet (*Narodny Paet*), a sort of Soviet equivalent of the Poet Laureate. All this official significance attached to them is out of proportion to their real achievements.

An attempt is made throughout the book to treat Byelorussian literature as part of one Soviet literature. One wonders whether this is another step towards the final ideal of creating one communist nation with a single communist culture.

The *History* contains in conclusion a *Chronicle of Literary Life* (altogether 100 pages) recounting year by year and month by month all the most

notable events in Byelorussian literature during the period 1941-64. It is a curious compilation, but one wonders what useful purpose it serves. Most certainly it cannot replace a good bibliography or a name-index, the absence of which is a grave omission on the part of the editors.

In the final analysis it is not a book without value if one compares it with previous works a similar kind. However it is certainly not what one would expect from an Academy of Sciences.

A. N.

BIELARUSKAJA DAKASTRYČNICKAJA PROZA (Byelorussian Prose of the Pre-October Revolution Period), Edited by P. Broŭka, Minsk 1965.

The early years of the 20th century up to 1917 were marked by a vigorous development of Byelorussian literature. This is particularly true of the years 1906-1915, the period in which the journal *Naša Niva* appeared. To give an illustration from the field of prose alone, during the years 1907-1909 that journal published 91 stories by 36 different authors, while in the following year 1910 30 writers published 69 prose works. Of course, not all of those works were of equal value. There was a comparatively small group of writers such as Kołas, Biadula, Jadvihin Š. and Harecki whose works are considered today among the best in modern Byelorussian literature. The majority of the authors, however, never progressed beyond the initial stage and, after having published one or two short stories — usually of little value, — they disappeared from the literary scene without leaving any significant trace.

The present publication, prepared by the Janka Kupala Institute of Literature of the Byelorussian Academy of Science, is an anthology of Byelorussian pre-1917 prose. It contains selected works — mostly short stories, — of 47 different authors. The majority of these works were originally printed in *Naša Niva* or other contemporary publications (*Maladaja Bielaruś, Lučynka, Bielaruś*). Many of them have never been republished since.

The great merit of this anthology lies in the fact that it has rediscovered authors such as Kandrat Lejka, Barys

Zajac, I. Dabrynec, Šciapan Biryła and a few others whose works have been undeservedly forgotten. It is also gratifying to note that such outstanding writers as Jadvihin Š. and Maksim Harecki have been restored at last to Byelorussian literature after years of calculated neglect in official circles.

The problem of selecting works for inclusion in a book of this kind will always present certain difficulties. One would imagine, however, that a suitable rule would be to concentrate on less known or totally unknown works, whilst omitting those which are readily available in other publications. It seems therefore a little unreasonable to give one fifth of the total space (the book has 400 pages) to the works of Kołas, Biadula, Ciotka and Bahdanovič, many of which are found in any school primer of Byelorussian literature. On the other hand, some authors are conspicuous by their absence. This is particularly true of Vaclaŭ Łastoŭski and Jury Žyvica (better known as Aleś Harun). Stories by these two writers, although not numerous, were highly appreciated by no less a critic than Maksim Bahdanovic. In Soviet Byelorussia they have been persistently ignored for reasons which, one surmises, have nothing to do with literature. There is nothing new in suppression of literary works for political reasons, but it does not reflect much credit on any institution which practices it. Other authors who have inexplicably been omitted include Siarhiej Pałujan, Jasep Losik, Novič and Tarus.

The early 20th century was also the period of the birth and development of Byelorussian literary criticism. The inclusion of a few critical essays by Siarhiej Paľujan, Anton Navina (Łuc-kievič), Maksim Bahdanovič, Lavon Hmyrak and Maksim Harecki would have considerably enhanced the value of the whole publication.

The editors have produced an interesting and valuable book contain-

ing much material hitherto practically unknown and inaccessible. It is a pity that they should have missed an excellent opportunity to present a more complete and balanced image of the early stage of development of modern Byelorussian prose. The book will be of great use to specialists interested in the history of Byelorussian literature.

A. N.

POŁOCKAJA ZEMLJA (The Land of Połack) P. V. Aleksejev, Moscow 1966. (In Russian).

This is a book by a Russian archaeologist who for many years worked in Byelorussia. It deals with the history of the Połack Principality during the 9-13th centuries and bears the subtitle: "Sketches of the History of Northern Byelorussia." The book was published under the auspices of the Institute of Archaeology of the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

Połack is one of the most ancient of all Byelorussian and East Slavic cities. Its history from the 9-13th centuries is to a large extent the history of Byelorussia itself, for at that time it was the centre of a powerful state which comprised roughly one half of the country's present-day territory. Comparatively little is known of its early history. One reason for this is the fact that many early documents — and in particular local chronicles, — were lost during the wars in the 16-17th centuries. Other East Slav chronicles, usually of Kievan origin, contain little information about Połack, because unlike other East Slav states which gravitated round Kiev, Połack was one of its most formidable political rivals. One can almost write the history of Połack in the 11-12th centuries in terms of its wars with Kiev.

The literature on Połack is scant. The only major work on the subject was *Očerki istorii Połockoj Zemli do konca XIV veka* (A Sketch of the History of the Land of Połack to the end of the XIV century) by V. Dani-levič, published in Kiev in 1896. It was an excellent book, but has long since become inadequate in the light of the progress of historical and archaeological research in recent years. The present book by Aleksejev is the most valuable contribution to the study of the subject to date. It is also

the most comprehensive, for the author makes full use of the results of the latest discoveries in the field of archaeology and history, as well as ethnography, dialectology, philology, toponymy, numismatics etc. The title *The Land of Połack* is taken from the name commonly used in the chronicles. The word *Land (zemla)* is here synonymous with state and denotes a territory politically, administratively and economically dependent on a given centre.

In an introductory chapter the author, after making a survey of existing literature and sources, goes on to describe in some detail the ethnographical history of Northern Byelorussia prior to the advent of the Slavs. With the help of archaeological and toponymical material he attempts to reconstruct an ethnical picture of Byelorussia in the middle of the first millenium A. D., when the country was populated by the Baltic tribes (the ancestors of the present-day Lithuanians and Latvians) who were its original inhabitants (pp. 21-27). The Slavs began to appear in Byelorussia in or about the 5th century A. D. The movement of various tribes and their final areas of settlement are the subject of the 1st chapter of the book (pp. 28-65). The southern regions of Byelorussia, occupied by the Slavic tribe of Dryhvičy, do not fall within the limits of the author's field of study. Northern and Central Byelorussia were gradually occupied by the tribe of Kryvičy. Infiltration started from the north, — i. e. from the Połack region, — and thence spread slowly southwards and westwards. The original Baltic population was not annihilated, but gradually assimilated until it dissolved completely in the mass of newcomers. In Aleksejev's

view, "The process of assimilation of Eastern Baits by the Slavs must be considered as one of the most important problems in the study of the formation of the Byelorussian nation" (p. 33).

Chapter 2 (pp. 66-82) is concerned with the territory of the Land of Połack which for the first time appeared as a political entity in the middle of the 9th century. It was an extensive state for those times, comprising the whole of Northern and Central Byelorussia and bordering on the lands of Pskov and Novgorod in the north, Smalensk in the east, Turaū in the south, and the Lithuanian and Latvian tribes in the west. The author's description of the physical and climatic conditions as well as the character of population distribution are of great interest. In trying to determine the exact boundaries of the Land of Połack Aleksejev makes use of the toponymical material in quite an original way. He began with the assumption that all places with the name *Miaža* (Byelorussian for *border*) and its derivatives used to lie on political boundaries. By plotting these on the map and joining them with a continuous line, he obtained a contour closely corresponding to the boundaries of the Land of Połack, as they are known from the other sources (pp. 77-82).

The rapid rise of Połack at an early period of its history was largely due to the fact that it held control of important international trade routes, which crossed its territory from north to south and from west to east. Aleksejev examines these in Chapter 3 (pp. 83-131) of his book. The most important was the water route "From Varengians to the Greeks", used by the Vikings in their travels to the Black Sea and Byzantium. One branch of it led along the rivers Neva, Volchov, Lovac and then down to the river Dniepr. The great attraction of this route was that it passed through the city of Novgorod in Northern Russia which was then an important trade centre. However, it was in the Połack territory, in the region of Viciebsk, that the boats of the travellers had to be carried overland from the rivers of the Baltic watershed to those of the Black Sea. Thus Połack controlled the key position on the route. Apart from the branch of the route just referred to, there was

another, along the Western Dzvina river passing through Połack. Bernstein-Kohan in 1950 was the first to express the view that this branch might have been more important than the route passing through Novgorod. Aleksejev supports this view. He writes: "The absence of hoards and single finds of Arabic and Byzantine coins between Viciebsk and Vialikija Łuki, and their abundance in the territory between the Dniepr and Dzvina, suggests that the route from Dniepr to Western Dzvina had greater importance in the international trade with the East than the route down the river Lovac to Novgorod, as Bernstein-Kohan has already pointed out" (p. 84).

There is an interesting survey of land routes in Northern Byelorussia. Seven highways led from Połack connecting that city with Riga (Baltic coast), Pskov, Novgorod, Viciebsk, Minsk and Lithuania. Another city situated at the junction of several international land routes was Minsk. One of these, passing through Zaslau, Łahojsk, Barysau, Druck, Orša and then to Smalensk and Muscovy was in continuous use from the 11th till the 19th centuries.

In Chapter 4 (pp. 132-191) the author gives a description of the various cities of the Land of Połack. Apart from Połack itself the survey includes Minsk, Druck, Viciebsk, Hercyke and Kukejnos, Braslau, Zaslau, Barysau, Orša, Usviat, Łahojsk, Kopyś, Łukoml, Strežau, Odersk and Niekałač. There are attempts at the reconstruction of the topography of certain towns, and also sections on town planning, buildings and town populations.

Chapter 5 (pp. 192-236) deals with the development of culture in the Land of Połack. The author first examines all the architectural and artistic monuments — or their remains, — in various cities of the Land. His attention is naturally focussed on Połack which in the 12th century developed a flourishing and original school of architecture. This was to have a profound effect on the architecture of all the East Slavs. Its founder was a talented native architect, Ivan, whose masterpiece, the Church of the Holy Saviour in Połack still stands to this day. The church was built for the convent of which the abbess was St. Euphrosyne, who had gained renown *inter alia* for her untiring activity in fostering the arts and learning. Aleksejev

has succeeded in producing impressive evidence of the high state of culture and of the widespread literacy in the towns belonging to Połack.

The last chapter (pp. 237-288) is concerned with the political history of Połack from the first mention in the chronicles under the year 862 until its incorporation into the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the middle of the 13th century. The main sources for this chapter were various notes found in East Slav and Livonian chronicles. They have been well known for a long time, but the author has frequently given them a new interpretation. The following passage from the postscript can be taken as a fair summary of this chapter: "In about the 10th century the country was united by the intersection of the greatest East Slav trade routes passing through Northern Byelorussia from south to north and from west to east. The portage points on the water routes were all within the territory of Połack, and thus it dominated the key positions of international transit — a fact which could not fail to play a decisive role in its economic development... This country was the first to open a way towards political and economic independence. The first commercial and trade centres appeared there as early as 9-10th centuries (Połack, Viciebsk) or at the beginning of the 11th (Druck) and were always situated on commercial water routes. The local feudal class began to expand its territory earlier than the feudal classes of other lands, imposing tribute and subjugating the hitherto free lands of the Northern Dryhvičy, some East Lithuanian areas, Latgalia and the Baltic tribes along the Western Džvina. Territorial expansion could not continue indefinitely, and it was bound to lead to conflict with feudal lords of other lands. At the head of the Principality of Połack there was a dynasty, related to the common East Slav ruling house, but by-passed by them and excluded from their line of succession. As a result of these two circumstances, hostility and wars with neighbouring princes, with the princes

of other East Slav lands, and in particular with Kiev, were the chief factors which dominated the entire history of Połack in the pre-Lithuanian period. The principality of Połack was thus the most independent among the ancient East Slavic states, having developed at the same time an original culture." (p. 290).

By the "common East Slav ruling house" the author doubtless means the Princely House of Kiev. This is not a very felicitous expression, for it may create an impression that the *imperium* of Kiev extended over all East Slav — or *Rus'*, as they were called, — lands. This is certainly not the case of Połack, which, as the author demonstrates elsewhere, was an independent state from a very early age.

The commonly held view today is that the Eastern Slavs initially formed one ethnical, political and cultural whole. This view originated with the 19th century Russian historians, who also tried to identify *Rus'*, as the East Slav lands were originally known, with *Russia* — the name assumed by the state of Muscovy at the beginning of the 18th century. In such a concept the Byelorussians and Ukrainians have no history of their own. It may be noted that Soviet historians follow in the footsteps of their Russian predecessors, as even a cursory glance at any school textbook on the history of the USSR will show.

It was the Ukrainian historian M. Hruševskij who in 1904 first challenged the established view of Russian historians and argued that Russians, Ukrainians and Byelorussians should be considered as separate entities, from the very beginning. The present book by Aleksejev lends strong support to this view and shows how fruitful such an approach is in the case of Byelorussia.

It is an excellent work and it is hoped that it will encourage Byelorussian scholars to a deeper study of the history of their own country, of which so little has been known until the present day.

A. N.

CHRONIKA BYCHOVCA (The Chronicle of Bychaviec). Edited by N. Ulaščik, Moscow, 1966 (In Russian).

The so-called "Lithuanian Chronicles" occupy an important place in

middle Byelorussian literature. They were all written in the 15th or early

16th centuries, and comprise a nucleus of the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania from the death of the Grand Duke Alhierd (Olgerdas) in 1377 until about the year 1450. This nucleus was most probably written by a contemporary. The author's attention was mainly focussed on the conflict between the Grand Duke of Lithuania Vitaūt (1392-1430) — something of a hero figure in the chronicles, — and his cousin, the Polish king Jahajła. Most of the chronicles continue the narrative of events up to the early 16th century. It is usual to divide the "Lithuanian Chronicles" into two groups. In the first group, known as the "shorter version" of the chronicles, the principal theme is preceded by a compilation from the ancient Rus' (i. e. East Slav) chronicles, which have no direct bearing on the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The chronicles of the second group, or the "extended version", on the other hand, contain a section, composed at a date later than the original nucleus, which deals with the early — mainly legendary, — history of Lithuania and attempts to derive the origins of the Lithuanian people from ancient Rome.

The Chronicle of Bychaviec by its composition stands nearer to the second group. Yet there are good reasons for considering it to stand in a class apart. Firstly, it was composed later than the other known chronicles. Its author was no doubt familiar with earlier works of this sort, of which he made use, but at the same time included much new material which is not to be found elsewhere. The latter part of the Chronicle, covering the reign of the Grand Duke Alexander (1492-1506) is of particular interest in that it appears to have been written not only by a contemporary, but by an eyewitness of many of the events therein described. This is especially true of the description of the Tatar invasion in 1504 and of the defeat of the Tatars by the forces of the Grand Duchy near Kleck in 1506. In vividness and wealth of detail these passages have no equal in the history of Byelorussian chronicle writing, and in form come very close to memoir literature.

The author of the Chronicle of Bychaviec was not devoid of literary talent, and he succeeded in endowing his work with a compositional unity. He seems to have pursued a definite

aim, namely that of illustrating the superiority of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania over Poland. In the 16th century, when the Chronicle was composed, both countries had been bound by close political links for over a century. It often happened that the same person was simultaneously the Grand Duke of Lithuania and King of Poland, although the offices were completely separate (not unlike the first Hanoverian kings of England). The Poles, whose influence was steadily growing, were pressing for the establishment of a complete political union in which the separate identity of the Grand Duchy would disappear. This provoked deep resentment on the part of the nobility of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, especially among the magnates. The author of the Chronicle of Bychaviec, who sympathised with the magnates, reflected their feelings in a very original way. In his work he never misses an opportunity of presenting the Poles in an unfavourable light, even at the expense of historical truth. Thus in the description of the famous battle of Grunewald in 1410 (in the Chronicle the date is mistakenly given as 1413) where the combined Polish and Lithuanian armies defeated the Teutonic knights, the author ascribes the victory solely to Lithuanians, whereas the Poles "did nothing to help, but only looked on." Again in 1430 it was the Poles who intercepted the envoys carrying the royal crown from the Pope to the Grand Duke Vitaūt. On yet another occasion, during the joint Polish-Lithuanian parliament in Parczow in 1448, the Polish nobles resolved to murder the Lithuanians by treachery, and the latter were only saved by leaving the place in secret, after having received confidential warning... Similar examples may be multiplied.

Whenever the author mentions Moscow it is usually in order to describe an episode in which it is placed in some humiliating position, at the mercy of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania. The most significant was the incident involving the Grand Duke Alhierd (1345-77) who, after a successful military campaign which brought him to the walls of Moscow, decided magnanimously not to take that city, being moved by pity for the Muscovite duke Dimitri who came out in person to implore Alhierd's mercy. On

another occasion the Grand Duke Vitaūt organised a campaign against the cities of Novgorod and Pskov, telling them: "You pay tribute to my son-in-law Vasil of Moscow, who is but my vassal, yet at the same time you refuse to pay it to me, who am your rightful lord."

The heroes of the Chronicle are the Grand Dukes of Lithuania Hiedymin (1316-41), Alhierd, Vitaūt and Kazimir (1440-92), during whose reigns the Grand Duchy achieved the zenith of its political and military might. Yet this did not mean the author was always in agreement with them. In the internal affairs of the Grand Duchy he was the spokesman of the magnate class and as such found himself sometimes in opposition to the sovereign's prerogative.

The Grand Duchy of Lithuania was a joint state of ethnical Lithuanians and Byelorussians. Culturally it was Byelorussian almost from the start, but in political life the ethnical Lithuanian element predominated initially. It is however interesting to note from the Chronicle how, in the course of the 15th century ethnical Lithuanian names like Gaštold, Kieżgajło, Monvid slowly gave way to Byelorussian names such as Chadkievič, Sapieha, Chalecki, Hlebovič and others, as these began to play an ever more prominent part. Yet all these nobles, regardless of their ethnical origin, were conscious of being "Lithuanian" in a political sense.

Thus although dealing mostly with events in the 15th century, the author of the Chronicle had very much in mind the political situation of the 16th, during which the work was composed.

The Chronicle ends abruptly with a description of the defeat of the Tartars near Kleck in 1506, and the final pages of the manuscript seem to have been lost.

The original of the Chronicle has disappeared. A late 16th century copy —written in Latin characters, — was found early in the 19th century in the possession of a Byelorussian nobleman from the Hrodna district Bychaviec — hence the name of the Chronicle. The text of this copy was published for the first time by the historian Theodore Narbutt in Vilna in 1846 and later reprinted in the 17th volume of the *Polnoje sobranije russkich letopisej* (The Full Collection of Russian

Chronicles) in Petersburg in 1907. Both editions are today bibliographical rarities. The new publication by Ulaščik, even if it is only a Russian translation, is therefore most welcome. The editor provides the text with an extensive introduction, copious notes and useful indices of names and places. In the introduction he gives the history of the finding and publication of the text and makes a survey of the existing literature on the Chronicle, paying particular attention to works by Narbutt, Tichomirov, Sušycki and Jakubowski. He also makes an attempt to establish a more exact date for the composition of the Chronicle, and to learn more about the identity of its author. On the first question, however, nothing more definite could be stated than that the *terminus ante quem* the Chronicle was compiled was the year 1565. This could be established from the internal evidence of the text, and corroborated by the fact that the Chronicle was known to the Polish historian Maciej Strykowski, who used it as a source in composing his *Kronika* published in 1582. As to the identity of the author, from the linguistic and factual analysis of the text, Ulaščik came to the conclusion that he was an Orthodox Byelorussian nobleman from the Sluck-Navahradak district in central Byelorussia, closely connected with the Dukes of Sluck. This conclusion is much more convincing than that of Tichomirov who in 1901 expressed the opinion that the author of the Chronicle was a native of Volhynia. In the first place, even if one disregards the linguistic evidence, there is a curious lack of concern over the fate of Volhynia, whereas the importance of Navahradak is stressed whenever the occasion arises. Secondly, the latter part of the Chronicle abounds in such a wealth of topographical details (even the exact distances from one place to another are indicated) that it could only have been written by a person thoroughly familiar with the locality. The detailed description of events suggests that the writer may well have been an eyewitness. Yet one reservation is called for. The Chronicle of Bychaviec, like all other works of this kind, is largely a work of compilation. The question arises: was the author of the complete work which is known today under the name of the Chronicle of Bychaviec also the original author of its latter part, or

did he rely on an existing written source? If the first is true, then the conclusion arrived at by Ulaščik is fully justified. In the second case, however, one cannot go beyond the general statement that the author was a Byelorussian nobleman from central Byelorussia.

The Chronicle of Bychaviec is undoubtedly an outstanding work of Byelorussian literature of the 16th century and must rank together with the Memoirs of Jeŭlašeŭski (also a

native of the Navahradak district), the Chronicle of Barkuŭabaŭ and Letters of Filon Kmita. It has been insufficiently known till the present day. It is to be hoped that this publication by Ulaščik will stimulate interest in the work. It is a pity that the editor did not consider it necessary to publish, parallel to his Russian translation, the original Byelorussian text of the Chronicle, which remains as inaccessible today as it ever was.

A. N.

GEORGIJ SKARYNA (Francisk Skaryna), Ściapan Majchrovič Minsk 1966, pp. 187.

There has in recent years been a welcome growth of interest in the life and work of Francis Skaryna, the first translator and printer of the Bible in the Byelorussian language. The year 1967 marks the 450th anniversary of the publication of his great work in Prague. To commemorate this event Majchrovič, himself a literary critic of some standing in official circles, has published a study, or rather interpretation, of the life and activity of a particularly engaging figure of the Byelorussian Renaissance.

To make some sense out of Majchrovič's treatise, one must give some attention to changing official attitudes on Skaryna and his heritage. In Tsarist times, Skaryna attracted little interest, save from one or two specialists such as Vladimirov and Karski. To most he lay outside the pattern of XVIIth century Russian culture and was variously described as a "Pole" or a "West Russian". Certainly his language was full of non-Russian words, and his engravings had little in common with the iconography of Moscow. It was for the Byelorussian writers of the 1920's such as V. Pičeta and M. Ščakacichin, as well as Professor A. Florovski in Prague, to identify and disclose the significance of Skaryna's work in the field of Byelorussian literature and art. In such a context the apparent contradictions between the Western and Byzantine aspects of the Humanist outlook were resolved, and a true perspective established. Since the 1930's however, persistent attempts have been made in official circles to play down the individuality of Byelorussian cultural traditions, and to stress any factor showing the identity of interest between the Byelorussian,

Ukrainian and Russian nations. Any deviation from this line — and a too individualistic approach to Skaryna's art constituted just such a deviation — was suspect; authors who adopted it were considered as bourgeois nationalists and dealt with accordingly (Cf. N. Vakar, *Byelorussia, the Making of a Nation*, Cambridge (Mass.) 1956, p. 148). It is hardly surprising that the study of Skaryna languished. When in the 1950's books about the Renaissance humanist began once again to appear, they were preoccupied to the point of embarrassment with showing Skaryna as a social progressive, and an apostle of Eastern Slav unity. Although his Christian name was Francisk — a name which he used constantly all his life, and which appears on all his works, — officialdom would tolerate none of this and he was renamed Georgij — supposedly less Westernized than Francisk — and this on the authority of a single mention of a "Georgij" in a manuscript concerning Skaryna, which subsequently was shown to be a scribal error for "egregius." Controversy continues to rage about his religion. Officialdom will have it that he was Orthodox, although he was in fact the secretary to a Catholic Bishop. The references in his book to "Svoe bratij Rusi" are interpreted as alluding to his concern for the people of Russia. He is credited with being a free-thinker and, on the flimsiest evidence, with nurturing a wish to establish a printing press in Moscow. Any factor tending to identify or associate Skaryna with the Westernising trend which prevailed in XVIIth-century Byelorussia, is either glossed over, or ignored.

Apart from some genuine scholarly

research by a Byelorussian historian in the West, Symon Braha, a few Soviet writers have in recent times deviated from the official version of Skaryna's activity and views. I. N. Goleniščev-Kutuzov, a Russian, leaves no room for doubt over his own opinion of Skaryna's name — he calls him Francisk throughout — or his religion, which he roundly states was Catholic (Cf. I. Goleniščev-Kutuzov, *Гуманизм у Восточных Славян*, М. 1963, p. 231. It may seem inconceivable to the average reader that relatively insignificant details should give rise to such heated debate. Nevertheless these little controversies represent so many stages in a far wider issue, namely the character of Byelorussian culture itself, and its relationship to Russia. Did it have, and can it have, an existence independent of its "elder brother"?

And so, in considering Majchrovič's treatise, one must perforce bear in mind the underlying political issues. From the title of his booklet there is little doubt as to where the author's allegiance lies committed. Political reliability is not, however, a substitute for scholarship. For example, Majchrovič makes much of Skaryna's reputed visit to Moscow, based on a Latin document quoted by Josef Fiedler (Cf. *Sitzungsberichte der Philosophisch-Historischen Classe der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaft*, Band XL, Heft I. Wien, 1862 p. 110). The relevant passage reads: *Quin cum Divo parente nostro regnante quidam de subditis eius pio studio ductus sacram scripturam lingua russica imprimi et in lucem aedi currasset, et ad Moschos venisset, publice eos libros iussu Principis concrematos esse propterea quod a Romanae ecclesiae addicto, et in locis eiusdem auctoritati subjectis editi essent.* Although not specifically mentioned by name, and although the evidence is purely hearsay, there is a fair chance that the person concerned was in fact Skaryna. But to elaborate further on the report, as Majchrovič does, is to trespass on the paths of phantasy: "Let us just imagine the titanic desire of this great humanist for educational work for the benefit of 'his brothers of Ruś', his everlasting attraction towards Moscow, and we may become convinced that such a broadly conceived undertaking might well have taken place" (p. 71). Elsewhere Majchrovič writes: "Very

probably Skaryna was carried away with the 'Muscovite perspectives' for printing books as a result of the journey to Moscow of his friend the Vilna merchant and patron Bahdan Onkaŭ in 1525-1527. Onkaŭ could not have failed to observe the more or less favourable conditions for Skaryna's activity in the Great-Russian capital. One may imagine Skaryna's sincere enthusiasm over his new plan for printing books, not somewhere abroad, but in the very centre of Ruś. His enquiring nature as an educationalist-humanist, and social-worker demanded a great expansion of activity, and he sought to apply his genial talents and universal knowledge rationally in the interest of his kinsmen, "the people who spoke the Ruthenian language" (pp. 73-74). Unfortunately these brave hopes went up in the smoke of "librorum concrematorum" which Onkaŭ failed to foresee and which Majchrovič fails to mention.

One is led to wonder, for example, why it was that in his engraving of the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchodonosor, Skaryna depicts the Babylonian armies attired in Muscovite dress, whereas he himself places his own standard among the feudal knights of Israel, decked out as Lithuanian cavaliers. In fact Skaryna's whole life and work proclaim that, far from being "everlastingly attracted" towards Moscow, the great humanist and engraver was drawn very strongly in the opposite direction — towards the West. Majchrovič forgets the very strong patriotic feeling of the Byelorussian people towards the institutions of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and that this feeling was shared to the full by Francis Skaryna. It is not for nothing that the song celebrating the defeat of the Muscovite invaders at Orša in 1514 has passed into Byelorussian folklore.

In addition to an excess of material more suited to a work of fiction or a party political pamphlet, than to a scientific study, Majchrovič's book contains more than a fair share of errors and omissions. Speaking of the departure of Skaryna from Vilna the author observes: "It is known that Vilna where the ruling caste was made up of Catholic Jesuits and obscurantists, finally disillusioned Skaryna." What disillusioned Skaryna, or whether he was ever disillusioned at

all, is very much an open question. What is certain is that his demise from Vilna in 1530 or thereabouts, cannot be laid at the door of the Society of Jesus, which was officially recognised in 1540 in Rome and only established in Vilna in 1569, some 30 years after Skaryna's death. Majchrovič makes no mention of Skaryna's service with John King of Denmark in 1509, or his attendance on

Jan, the Catholic Bishop of Vilna, whose secretary he was. These, and many other similar features, confer on Majchrovič work an unmistakable 'Muscovite perspective.' His views are not supported by his more distinguished Soviet colleagues, and contribute little that is positive to our knowledge of that generous and genial mind which was Francisk Skaryna's.

G.P.

BELORUSSKIJ BALET (Byelorussian Ballet) Julia Čurko, Minsk, 1966, pp. 126 (in Russian).

After briefly exploring the origins of Byelorussian Ballet, which the author traces back to folk-dances and XVIIIth century puppet Nativity plays, Mme Čurko outlines the evolution of Byelorussian Ballet until the year 1917. The modern period is fully and adequately dealt with, and it is pleasant to find yet another field in which Byelorussian artists have been

able to evolve their own national idiom.

The early period of ballet is dealt with in a very summary manner, in a space of barely 12 pages. It is tantalising to hear of ballet-schools at Hrodna, Niasviž and Słonim under the old Grand Duchy, and one would have wished to learn more of their achievements.

KOMPOZITORY SOVETSKOJ BELORUSSII (Composers of Soviet Byelorussia) D. Žuravl'ev, Minsk 1966, pp. 224 (in Russian).

In a slim but useful little book, Žuravl'ev gives some biographical notes on Byelorussian composers, particularly of more recent times. Unfortunately there is little or nothing about the early period of Byelorussian music before the Revolution. It is, however, good to have a small reference book with details of the lives of such composers as M. Aliadoū (b.

1890), A. Bohatyreū (b. 1913), H. Pukst (b. 1900), E. Cikočki (b. 1893), A. Turankaū (1886-1958), E. Tymand (b. 1917), H. Cytovič (1910), N. Curkin (1869-1964) and H. Šyrma (b. 1892). One regrets the omission of two outstanding composers, M. Ravienski and M. Kulikovič, for reasons which one suspects have no connexion with music.

PO DOROGAM VREMENI — ISTORIČESKIJE PAMIATNIKI BELORUSSII (On the Paths of Time — The Historical Monuments of Byelorussia), Minsk, 1966, pp. 72 (in Russian).

This collection of photographs together with a commentary purports to represent the historic monuments of Byelorussia. The monuments of the early period, such as the Church of Kałożža (p. 9) or the Castle of Mir (p. 14), are of great interest, though they

are evidently in a lamentable state of repair. With few exceptions the greater part of the book is given over to celebrating Imperial Russian Generals and partisans, together with their feats of arms. The space devoted to Byelorussian History is negligible.

MAXIM TANK'S POETRY (A selection in English translation) Soviet Literature Monthly, No. 10, Moscow 1966, pp. 129-138.

This is a selection of the poems of Maxim Tank, one of the leading contemporary Byelorussian poets, and a distinguished contributor to the literary journal *Kalošse*, which appeared in Vilna before the last war.

Tank's poetry is lyrical and candid. Daily bread, dusty roads, native land and sweat are recurring themes in his more consciously social poems. In his more personal moods, as in "The stars at night glitter on shimmering

waters", and "People are born in many a way", his descriptive genius and delicate perceptiveness give his work a timeless quality which is the hallmark of true poetry: —

"... You could have described the
[autumn,

The two rowans growing by the
[cottage,
The smoke of fires over the bare
[fields,
The cranes flying in the chilly sky."

BIELARUSKAJA ANTRAPANIMIJA — M. V. Biryła, Minsk, 1966, 328 pp.

Although this is the first attempt at a comprehensive study of the subject, M. V. Biryła's new book is a reflection of the current interest in onomatology that has produced a number of articles in Byelorussian and other academic publications over recent years. Basing this study on material drawn from a wide range of historical and judicial documents from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, the author shows how Byelorussian names (he deals with forenames,

patronymics, surnames and nicknames) have developed from Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Germanic and other origins. Of particular interest is the way pagan names were reduced to the status of nicknames with the advent of Christianity. Although intended primarily as a reference book for linguists and ethnographers *Bielaruskaja antrapanimija* has considerable interest for the general reader, and may on both counts be warmly welcomed at this time.

TLUMAČALNY SŁOŪNIK BIELARUSKAJ MOVY DLA ŚIAREDNIAJ ŠKOŁY — A. Ja. Bachańkoŭ, I. M. Hajdukievič, P. P. Šuba, Minsk, 1966, 323 pp.

"Every other kind of author may aspire to praise; the lexicographer can only hope to escape reproach, and even this negative recompense has yet been granted to very few": Dr. Johnson's remarks, though apposite in many cases, are hardly relevant in the field of Byelorussian where, from many points of view, Nasovic's dictionary of 1870 has, for want of serious competition, remained the most useful source of lexical information for nearly a century. This new work, comprising some 5,000 words, is the first all-Byelorussian dictionary of the literary language ever to be printed and, from this aspect alone, marks a new era in the lexicography of the language. Joy at its appearance can-

not, however, be unconfined, thanks to the work's small compass and not always judicious selection of material: it is difficult, for example, to discern the purpose of a section such as that entitled 'Słovy i zvaroty vietlivasci': for example, '*Dziakuju Vam!* — vykazvaŭnie padziaki kamu-n. za paśľuhu.' Produced by research workers in the Instytut Movaznaŭstva Akademii Navuk BSSR, it seems to be an early by-product of the long-heralded Etymological Dictionary of Modern Byelorussian now being prepared by that body. *Faute de mieux* it is necessary for all students and teachers of the language, but is already difficult to obtain thanks to an edition of only 15,000.

DYJALEKTNY SŁOŪNIK (Z HAVORAK MŚCISLAŪŠČNY) H. Jurčanka, Minsk, 1966, 227 pp.

This new dictionary may be welcomed on a number of counts: its material is recorded with due care for phonological and morphological accuracy; unnecessary matter (for example, words found also in the standard literary language) is omitted, whilst significant differences in stress and spelling are noted; moreover it deals with a region not yet studied from

a linguistic point of view. More than 2,000 dialectal words are explained in literary Byelorussian, and particular attention is paid to figurative and unusual meanings. Thus with the advent of this new work we have a relatively full picture of the East Byelorussian dialects (Minsk, Babrujsk, Homiel, Mścistaŭ, Viciebsk, Smalensk) whilst the West, North

West and South of the country remain, linguistically, unknown quantities. The author seems unduly anxious to justify his work, and to this end offers a linguistically irrelevant introduction, including much reference to Russian

writers and some ill-founded anti-religious propaganda, but nonetheless the book must be welcomed as an addition to the small but growing resources available to the theoretical linguist.

AB NIEKATORYCH ASABLIVAŚCIACH BIEĻARUSKAJ LITARATURNAJ MOVY, Minsk, 1965, 184 pp.

This miscellaneous collection of articles, published under the auspices of the Akademija Navuk BSSR, is as varied in style and approach as in subject matter. Of some interest are the articles by A. P. Grucio: 'Suadnosnaść pamiž składanymi sintaksičnymi kanstrukcyjami litaraturnaj i narodnaj movy', M. H. Bułachaŭ: 'Zahlaniam u šviet statyŭtyki form' and I. K. Hiermanovič: 'Leksikałahičnyja natatki', although the letter's opening statement: "Važniejšaj asab-

livašciu litaraturnaj movy z'jaŭlajecca narmatyŭnaść" begs a number of questions. But however valuable individual contributions, and in this case the general standard is not high, one is bound to question the wisdom of offering such variegated material in non-periodical publications; a greater degree of selectivity on the part of editors together with some measure of thematic unity could only be of benefit to such enterprises.

BIEĻARUSKAJA MOVA (DAŠLEDAVAŃNI PA LEKSIKAŁOHII Minsk, 1965.

The vocabulary is without doubt the least studied aspect of both the literary and the popular Byelorussian language, and thus a collection of articles such as the present one must be welcomed not only for its own intrinsic merits but also for reflecting revived academic interest in a neglected field. The articles encompass many different aspects of lexicology and lexicography, from information about a forthcoming etymological dictionary and a discussion of the general problems of such compilations, to articles on specific problems of word origins and formations, loan words and dialectal usages. M. P. Łoban (5-12) discusses some of the criteria adopted by the compilers of the new academy dictionary, dismissing the language of important nineteenth century writers like Dunin-Marcinkievič, Hurynovič and Bahuševič as dialectal, and giving in his supporting examples particular emphasis to those words that coincide with Polish. The implication is clearly that the norms and usages of the last century are to be ignored except where they coincide with what appears to be present-day practice,

even though the lexical state of the contemporary language leaves a great deal to be desired. I. K. Hiermanovič's 'Naziraŭni nad leksikaj biełaruskaj litaraturnaj movy 20-30-ch hadoŭ XX st.' (13-25) offers some material on synonyms and usages from his interesting but unpublished candidate's thesis, *Narmalizacyja leksiki biełaruskaj litaraturnaj movy ŭ 20-30 hh. XX St.*, Minsk, 1963. Of particular interest is the article on words of German origin in the XV-XVII centuries by A. I. Żuraŭski, undoubtedly one of the most talented of present-day Byelorussian linguists (60-73). Ł. A. Małaš and A. S. AksamitaQ continue their work on the phraseology of Byelorussian folksongs, whilst many other investigators offer observations on small semantic groups of words. V. U. Martynaŭ writes briefly but, as usual, interestingly on some general linguistic problems: 'Mietady rašeŭnia niekatorych typavych etimałahičnych zadač' (185-9). On the whole, this is one of the most interesting collections of philological articles to be published in Minsk for some time.

A. B. McM.

REVIEWS OF PERIODICALS

BACKAŪSCYNA (The Fatherland), Munich, 1966.

Anglo-Byelorussian relations are a relatively recent phenomenon, though they have their history, even now. V. Siankievič gives an interesting account of Alexander MacCallum Scott's connexions with the leaders of the Byelorussian National Rada, as described in his book "Beyond the Baltic" (London, 1925). It is not generally appreciated that MacCallum Scott, quite apart from his interest in Byelorussian affairs, was an English politician of some distinction. He was called to the Bar at the Middle Temple in 1906, was elected to Parliament, and became Parliamentary Private Secretary to Winston Churchill in 1917. Shortly before his death in 1928, he became a member of the Editorial Sub-committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society which dealt with the publication of Anton Łuckievič's translation of the New Testament, printed in Helsinki in 1931. He gave the Society some guidance on the problem of the Byelorussian language; it is partly through his intervention that the Byelorussian translation was ultimately published.

(1/634, 1 & 5). P. Urban deals with the problems confronting Byelorussian Soviet historians in writing on the early history of their country (1/634, 2-3). V. Paškievič contributes a commemorative article to mark the 50th anniversary of the death of the poetess Aloisa Paškievič (Ciotka) (1/634, 7). There is a report on the destruction of ancient Byelorussian monuments by local authorities (2/635, 5 & 8), and A. Zaleski reviews the recent work of the Soviet writer Vasil Bykaŭ, whose novel *The dead feel no pain* has aroused much criticism in official circles (2/635, 5). V. Siankievič contributes an article on the revival of Byelorussian printing after 1906 and of the work of the *Zahlanie sonca z ū naša vakonca* group in St. Petersburg sixty years ago (3/636, 5). There is also an article on the language of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (3/636, 8). A. Zaleski deals with the second edition of the Statute of Lithuania of 1566, which was modified with a view to a political Union with Poland. It never proved popular and was finally amended yet again in 1588 (4/637, 4).

BIAŁYSTOCKI ROCZNIK — TOM VI (The Białystok Yearbook — Vol. VI). Białystok, 1966 (in Polish).

There is little in the section devoted to general Studies which is of interest to students of Byelorussian affairs. D. Fajnhauz does raise a few interesting points in his article on Journalism in Vilna during the mid-19th century. He considers the programme and achievements of the Vilna periodical *Pamiętnik Naukowo-Literacki*, which appeared in the Polish language from 1849 to 1850 under the editorship of Romuald Podbereski. In its programme Edward Żeligowski affirmed that "the foremost problem is the cause of the peasants, their material and moral status, their inner life, character and customs." The paper was suppressed by order of the Tsar Nicholas I in 1850 (27-57). An interesting series of articles deals with archaeological finds in the Suwalki district. S. Wierzbicka gives an account of archaeological research on Stone-age sites (147-166); Marian Ka-

czyński publishes the results of excavations conducted in a 5th century graveyard at Valoŭni (Pol. Wólowni) (167-207); T. Rogalski and E. Prominska analyse fragments of bone from the Valoŭni cemetery, and draw the conclusion that the Sudovian population of the area enjoyed a reasonably high standard of living. There are further details of the 1962 excavations at another Sudovian barrow-ground at Żyvaja Vada (Pol. Żywa Woda) by W. Ziemnińska-Odojowa (229-238), and at an early Mediaeval cremation grave near Kuraševa (Pol. Kuraszewo) in the Hajnaŭka district by D. Jaskanis (239-265). In a valuable historical study of the functional evolution of the West Byelorussian city of Białystok, W. Kusinski traces its development from the 18th century residential township into an administrative centre in Neu-Ostpreussen under German rule during

the first decade of the 19th century. The section dealing with the development of the textile industry in Białystok after 1832 is of particular interest (267-296). St. Szymański gives a history and traces the evolution of the architecture of the Royal Palace in Hrodna, in which he finds Franco-German and Italian influences. The article is illustrated by numerous plans, drawings and photographs (297-333). In a study of present day folk tradition about the 1863 Insurrection in the Suwałki region S. Frelek culls some interesting hearsay evidence from descendants of those who took a part in the uprising. The value of such material is perforce dubious, but it constitutes a good example of the survival in popular consciousness of historic events (405-425). Marian Lech gives details of the town of Białystok and its inhabitants in the 18th century, including an inventory and census, with valuable information on the flourishing Jewish settlement there (441-454). The same author also publishes an inventory of the Vilna Armoury in 1746 which testifies to the deplorable state into which the Army of the Grand Duchy had fallen in the first half of the 18th century (455-457). A. Eisenbach comments on

an Imperial Russian Decree directed against Jews participating in the smuggling of arms through Białystok prior to the 1863 Uprising (459-471).

The books and articles reviewed in the *Rocznik* of interest to the student of Byelorussian affairs include J. Wasicki, *Ziemie polskie pod zaborem pruskim. Prusy Nowowschodnie (Neuostpreussen) 1799-1806*, Poznań, 1963, pp. 283, Pozn. Tow. Przyj. Nauk; E. Wiecko, "Dzieje Puszczy Białowieskiej od rozbiorow do 1918 r.", *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej*, XI, Warsaw, 1963, pp. 297-352; St. Herbst, "Gródek nad Supraślą", *Księga Pamiątkowa ku czci prof. W. Antoniewiczza* (Swiatowit, v. XXIV — 1962), pp. 669-675; *Materiały do dziejów ziemi scjnieńskiej* red. J. Antoniewiczza, Prace Białostockiego Towarzystwa Naukowego, 1, Białystok 1963, pp. 382, z ilustr. i mapkami; *Naukowy Zbornik Vydavievtva Haloūnaje Praūnennie Bicularuskaha Hramadska-Kulturnaha Tavarystva ū Polšču*, Białystok 1964, pp. 296 z ilustr. i mapkami; T. Wasilewski "Testament Ostafiego Wołowicza", *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce*, VII, Warsaw 1962, pp. 165-173; J. Zazieko, "V odnom stroju", *Nemen*, 2, Minsk 1964, pp. 136-145.

BIELARUS (The Byelorussian) — Byelorussian Newspaper of North America, New York-Toronto, 1966.

This monthly paper is one of the leading Byelorussian publications overseas, and contains much interesting material on the life and ideology of the Byelorussian settlements in America. In an unsigned editorial there is a short but well-balanced tribute to the founders and contributors of the journal *Naša Niva* which first appeared in 1906. Due recognition is given to the role played by writers officially out of favour in Soviet Byelorussia, such as Anton Luckievič, Al'bert Paŭłovič, Aleś Harun and Vaclaŭ Łastoŭski (106/1). K. Akula describes the reactions of the young Byelorussian poets to the wanton destruction of the XVIth century garrison church in Hrodna (106/2) and St. Krušynič considers the poetical output of the poet Maksim Tank in 1965 (106/3). The well-known journalist and historian St. Stankievič reviews the development of Byelorussian literature during the year 1965 (106/4-5) whereas E. Ciaŭloŭski contributes a short but valuable article on the life of the Byelorussian settle-

ments in the Argentine, and more particularly in the province of Missiones, Buenos Aires, Entre Rios, Santa Fé and Cordoba (106/5). There is an article by St. Krušynič to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the death of Aloisa Paškievič-Ciotka, poetess and editor of the youth journal *Lučynka* at the beginning of the present century (107/3). There is an abundance of reported speeches by United States Senators and Congressmen supporting the action of those seeking a greater measure of independence for present-day Byelorussia (108-109/2-7). V. Žuk contributes a few personal reminiscences on past commemorations in Byelorussia of the movement of the 25th March for national independence (108-109/9). Two interesting articles by M. Abramčyk and V. Paškievič provide details of the life and times of St. Hryškievič, a wellknown Byelorussian patriot and writer (110/2-3). The anniversary of the birth of Zmitrok Biadula is duly commemorated in a brief article by St. Krušynič (110/3).

BIELARUSKI INSTYTUT NAVUKI I MASTACTVA: ZAPISY, KNIHA IV. (Byelorussian Institute of Arts and Sciences: Annals, Vol. IV) Munich 1966.

This number of the Annals is largely taken up by a lengthy and well-documented article by Stanislau Stankievič on Byelorussian Literature under the Soviets in the first half of the sixties (7-169). In view of its range and volume it is proposed to review this important study in the next issue of the *Journal* when it appears in book form as planned. The historian Janka Zaprudnik contributes a study on the Question of Byelorussian Autonomy in the First Duma and its repercussions in the *Journal Naša Niva* (170-183). It is known that some of the most vocal Byelorussian politicians such as Vaclaŭ Łastoŭski and Anton Łuckievič were closely associated with the *Naša Niva* movement. It is therefore not surprising to find a considerable amount of criticism of the representatives of the *Severo-Zapadnyj Krai* (North-Western Territory) in St. Petersburg, who, though professing concern for the interests of the peasants, failed to do anything on their behalf. According to the editors of *Nasa Niva* there was little the Byelorussian farmer could expect from delegates chosen almost entirely from the ranks of the Polish and Russian establishment. Symon Braha deals exhaustively with the controversy over the Christian name of the Byelo-

rusian humanist Francis Skaryna. Unimportant though the dispute may seem to be, there are underlying political issues, namely the basic orientation of Byelorussian civilization. Those who claim that Skaryna's baptismal name was *Georgij* are those who stress the attachment, or even subordination of Byelorussian culture to that of its Russian neighbour. Braha comes down firmly in support of the name *Francišak*, which was that used by Skaryna himself in all his works. His analysis is echoed by the more progressive Soviet literary historians such as Aleksiutovic and Praskovic (184-216).

J. Zaprudnik publishes more documentation concerning the All-Byelorussian Congress of 1917, including extracts from books and articles which have now become difficult of access (E. S. Kančer, *Belorusskij vopros*, Petrograd, 1919; A. Čarviakoŭ, *Za savietskiju Bielaruś*, Minsk, 1927).

There are valuable notes by R. Maksimovič on a contemporary account of the Campaign of Ivan the Terrible against Lithuania in 1563 (247-250); by S. Braha on the origins of the name Bielaja Ruś (251-252); and by R. Maksimovič on the origins of Symon Budny, the XVIIth century Protestant reformer (256-259).

BIELARUS (Byelorussia), Minsk, 1966.

The younger poets have made a particularly valid contribution to the cultural standing of this well-presented popular monthly. Their works frequently reflect the present day preoccupation with new means of expression and the problem of the poet's place in a socialist society. In the field of the visual arts there are a few worth-while reproductions of works by A. Krol ("*Vilenskaja Saša*") (1/246), and I. Basaŭ ("*Pieršaja zia-*

nina"), with a few sculptures by Z. Azhur in the tradition of the *Belle époque*, which now appears to be enjoying a new popularity (Cf. "Paŭluk Bachrym") (X/23). There are a few historical articles: on Hrodna by M. Aleksiajuk (11/30), the coats of arms of Byelorussian cities under the Russian empire by T. Slesaruk (VI/8), and the school attended by J. Kołas by M. Dzielankoŭski (IX/18).

BOŻYM ŚLACHAM (On God's Highway), London, 1966.

A. Dziedzinka contributes interesting biographical data on a leading Byelorussian churchman and writer, Archimandrite Leŭ Haroška (No. 94/5-9). A few extracts from the book *Reise in mehrere russische Gouvernements in*

den Jahren 1788, 1801, 1807 und 1815 by Christian Schlegel give an interesting picture of life in XVIIIth century Byelorussia (No. 94/9-12). G. Pichura publishes further reproductions of engravings by Francis Skaryna (Nos.

94/15, 95/14). Fr. A. Nadson contributes a full and well-documented study of the life and work of the great spiritual writer of the XIIth century, St. Cyril of Turaŭ (Nos. 95/4-9, 96/2-7, 97/3-8, 98/3-9, and 99/5-7). There is a short biographical note by Fr. J. Hermanovič on Fr. V. Anoška (1899-1966) (95/10-11), and a brief sketch of life among early Byelorussian settlers in Canada by R. Tamušanski (No. 95/12). Byelorussian religious writings in the XVth century, including an interesting fragment of the Latin-rite Mass translated into Middle-Byelorussian are considered by Fr. A. Nadson (No.

96/8-10). G. Pichura examines the structure and contents of the *Supraśl Irmologion*, a collection of Byelorussian Church music recorded by Bohdan Anisimovič in 1601 (No. 97/8-12), and Fr. Hermanovič provides a few reminiscences of Fr. Kazimir Smulka (No. 98/13-15). E. and Uł. Šymaniec describe a visit to the Byelorussian settlements in England (No. 98/17-19). There are more Fables by Fr. Hermanovič (No. 99/15), notes on the poets Karatynski and Rypiński (No. 99/16), and some details about life among the Byelorussians in Australia (No. 99/18-19).

MAŁADOSC (Youth). A monthly. Minsk 1966.

The interest of *Maladość* is that it is a journal for the young by the young. Since its first appearance in 1953, it has become a platform for new talent, and many authors now well known began their literary career by publishing their first works in its pages. Some of them have never ceased their contributions.

Among prose works published in *Maladość* in 1966 one must single out the story *Adzin lapać druhi čuń* (One Bark Shoe, One Slipper; No. 9, 6) by Michaś Stralcoŭ. This is a fine study of the world of a small boy, living in a Byelorussian village in the immediate post-war period. The story is an undoubted success by an author who has already earned the reputation of one of the most promising young writers in Byelorussia.

Another fine story is *Jażelicha* (Jaželicha, a nickname; No. 6, 6) by Uładzimir Paŭlaŭ. This may be described as an affectionate portrait of a mother. The author has already made his name as a poet. The story is his first prose work and it is only to be hoped that he will continue in this genre.

Vasil Bykaŭ, an outstanding contemporary writer, cannot be called young by any stretch of imagination. Yet he seems to show a special predilection for *Maladość*, in which he publishes practically all his new works. This year there are two more of his stories: *Ranak svitanak* (The Early Dawn; No. 9, 69) and *Svaje ludzi* (Our Own People; No. 12, 88). As usual, they are character studies set in a tense war-time situation.

One should also mention a novel by Alena Vasilevič *Maja idylja* (My

Idyll; No. 3, 29), which bears the subtitle "A Journey into a Far-off Country." The far-off country in this case is a small Byelorussian village of the twenties, where the young heroine of the novel Hańka lives. The novel is intended for children, but — as often happens with the best works of this kind, — adults will find it hard to put it down before they reach the last page.

In the poetry section there is the first long poem by Danuta Bičel-Zahnietaŭa *Zyta* (The Rye; No. 12, 3). The lyrics of this talented poetess, with their rich language and imagery — and with personal emotions so interwoven with a feeling of love for one's country, that often it is impossible to distinguish one from another, — have a charm all of their own. However the last poem cannot be rated a great success. It seems rather to be a collection of shorter poems — each of them beautiful in itself, — loosely joined together, and a certain lack of compositional unity is discernible throughout.

Arthur Volski also contributes a longer poem *Planeta biez mohilak* (The Planet without Graves; No. 1, 6) which he himself describes as a "New Year phantasy." In it the poet makes an imaginary journey into the next century. He arrives in Minsk, and is worried by the fact that he does not understand the language of the inhabitants. However his doubts disappear when he hears a voice addressing him a greeting in Byelorussian. This gives the author an opportunity to sing a hymn of praise of his native tongue:

O, eternal language of my fathers!
 You are older than I,
 yet at the same time younger.
 Without you I would have
 no dreams and no hopes.
 Without you I could make
 no step in my life!
 Without you-
 it's retreat
 into darkness and cold.

One cannot help feeling that the author is here making a quiet tilt at the idea of "one communist nation with one language and one culture."

Scattered through the pages of *Maladość* there are poems by Ryhor Baradulin, Viera Viarba, Marjan Duksa, Aleś Naužrocki, Siarhiej Paniznik, as well as works of older poets such as Arkadź Kulasou and Alaksiej Pysin.

For those interested in the development of Byelorussian literature, there is an article by Vasil Bykaŭ *Piarom analityka* (With the Pen of an Analyst; No. 2, 120). In it the author, after noticing a certain lull in Byelorussian prose after the publication of recent works of Mieleż, Samiakin, Karatkievič, Bryl and others, attempts to define the path of its future development. Firstly he remarks that the war theme has been already fairly well exhausted. Yet he insists that the writers of his generation (Bykaŭ was born in 1924) have a duty to relate their war-time experiences, because no one else can do this in their stead. The younger generation has not experienced the emotional stresses created by war. The present day also has conflicts of no lesser emotional tension, but it needs a genius to reveal them. In the meantime what is required is "the scalpel of an analyst."

There are also interesting articles by Aleś Łojka *Poŭki i ŭplyvy mody* (The Searches and Influence of Fashion; No. 4, 136) about new poetry; and by Aleś Jaškievič *Samy lohki ci samy ciažki?* (The Easiest or the most

Difficult?; No. 10, 122) dealing with "lyrical prose."

Apanas Cykun contributes an article *Akademik z wioski Łaša* (The Academician from the Village of Łaša; No. 10, 136) about the life and work of the great Byelorussian philologist Jafim Karski. There are reminiscences by Vitali Volski on Zmitrok Biadula (No. 4, 91), and on the Bahdanovič brothers by their former schoolfriend Cichan Hodnieŭ (No. 12, 106). Klara Niekraš, of the Central Byelorussian State Archives of Literature and Art, publishes a few letters of Jakub Kołas to the literary critic L. Bende written during the years 1942-46 (No. 10, 107).

Alaksiej Hardzicki gives details of his interviews with the well known Byelorussian writer Ivan Mieleż (No. 5, 138) and the poet Uładzimir Dubouka (No. 12, 136). There is an interesting article by Anatol Sabaleŭski *Teatr Kandrata Krapivy* (The Theatre of Kandrata Krapiva; No. 3, 105) to mark the 70th birthday of this well known poet, playwright and scholar.

A special feature of *Maladość* is the abundance of illustrations, many of which are the first works of young Byelorussian artists. As might be expected, sections on sport and chess play a prominent role in the journal.

Maladość is a thoroughly lively and interesting periodical, full of material, much of which constitutes a valuable contribution to Byelorussian literature.

A. N.

NIVA (The Cornfield), Białystok, 1966.

As the result of a change in format and contents, the paper has lost much of its interest as a cultural journal. Uł. Paŭliučuk gives his personal reminiscences of Bronisław Taraškiewiç, a leading Byelorussian politician of the 1920's (1/514, 5; 2/515, 3). There is a curious article by P. Jurieŭ on a

demonstration of optical phenomena in a *camera obscura* conducted in the Basilian Monastery of Horadna in the early XIXth century by the Belgian optician Robertson (4/517, 5). Another article by Paŭliučuk deals with the activities of Byelorussian political organisations in the 1920's, in partic-

ular the Byelorussian Peasants Union (Rahula), the Christian Democrats (Fr. A. Stankievič), the Byelorussian Orthodox Democratic Union (Senator Bahdanovič), the Byelorussian Peasants Party and others (5/518, 3). J. Kazeka contributes a commemorative

article to mark the seventieth birthday of the poet Kandrát Krapiva (10/523, 6). Aleš Barščeŭski gives a few short observations on the journal *Naša Niva* (46/559, 1 & 5) and on the poet M. Bahdanovič (50/563, 1 & 5).

POŁYMIA (The Flame). A monthly journal of the Union of Byelorussian Soviet Writers. Minsk 1966.

The prose section of *Połymlia* this year lacks the richness and interest of last year. However it is unfair to expect writers of the stature of Šamiakin, Mielež and Karatkievič to produce masterpieces every year.

There is an interesting novel by Alaksiej Kułakouški *Rašcie miata pad aknom* (Mint Grows Outside the Window; No. 1, 8). The setting is the development of the new town of Kalijsk which the reader easily identifies with Salihorsk, the centre of Byelorussia's new mining industry. The author's interest is focussed on the chief engineer Leanid Vysocki and the librarian Eva Dym, who, in spite of many difficulties, find at last their own personal happiness. The novel has a thoroughly modern ring, and is written in a lively and entertaining style. It is hardly a great work of literature, but it is a sound work by a talented writer.

Two short stories by Ivan Ptašniaka *Ahni* (The Fires; No. 2, 12) and Ivan Čyhrynaŭ *U horad* (Going to Town; No. 2, 110) with their finely drawn portraits of human characters are worthy of note.

Arkadž Maŭzon publishes his new play *Kudy idzieš, Siarhieŭ?* (Where Are You Going, Siarhieŭ?; No. 2, 70). The hero, Siarhieŭ Kaval, a highly sensitive and intelligent young man, finds himself out of place in the "establishment." This potentially interesting theme was given an unfortunately superficial treatment by the author, and there is a sense of anticlimax at the end, when the main cause of the young Siarhieŭ's attitude is shown to be the bad influence of an older person, embittered by, and disappointed with, the present system.

There is the usual wide choice of new poems by Mikoła Aročka (No. 2), Ryhor Baradulin (No. 8), Piatruš Broŭka (Nos. 2 & 9), Hienadz Buraŭkin (No. 4), Anton Bialevič (No. 4), Viera Viarba (Nos. 3 & 8), Anatol Viarcinski

(No. 5), Nił Hilevič (No. 5), Uładzimir Karatkievič (No. 10), Eŭdakija Łoś (No. 3), Alaksiej Pysin (No. 5), Maksim Tank (Nos. 3 & 11), Kastuś Cvirka (No. 10) and others.

Of special interest is the novel *Kamaroŭskaja Chronika* (The Chronicle of Kamaroŭka; No. 3, 77) by Maksim Harecki. The work remained unfinished because of the death of the author in 1939, and it has had to wait nearly 30 years for its publication. At the time he wrote the novel Harecki was a political deportee, living far away from his native country. Another *voix d'outré tombe* is a fine short story by Łukaš Kaluha: *Ciesnavataja kurtka* (A Somewhat Narrow Jacket; No. 8, 89). This work was found among archival documents, although its author disappeared without leaving a trace in the year 1933. Jaŭhieŭ Ramanovič in his article about Zmitrok Biadula *Ekskizy da partreta* (Sketches for a portrait; No. 4, 133) writes: "The thirties were for Byelorussian literature a very fruitful, but at the same time complex period. Writers began to disappear in broad daylight, and thereafter one could get no news of them." It is good to see that those men, who were the innocent victims of an inhuman system, are not forgotten, and that their names and their works are restored to their proper place in Byelorussian literature. It is therefore with great interest and a feeling of regret that one reads another article by Jaŭhieŭ Ramanovič *Paet i čas* (The Poet and Time; No. 11, 138) where the author gives his personal reminiscences of the outstanding Byelorussian poet Michaś Čarot, who died in 1938 in a Soviet police prison. In the same way Janka Kazieka gives a fine literary portrait of a young talented writer Vasil Kaval (No. 1, 155), whose life and work ended tragically in 1937 in circumstances similar to Čarot. Finally Arsieŭ Lis in his article *Piešnia prasilasia u šviet* (The Song

was Asking to be Let Out into the World; No. 2, 151) writes about the life and work of the Byelorussian folk song collector Anton Hrynkievič, who disappeared without trace in 1930, soon after the first signs of the Stalinist terror began to appear.

The year 1966 marked the 75th anniversary of the birth of Maksim Bahdanovič. To celebrate this event, *Poŭmnia* published a series of articles about this poet and his work. There is an article by Anatol Kłyška *Cyiatok radzimy vasilka* (The Native Cornflower Bloom; No. 3, 171), which is an interesting attempt at reconstructing the genesis and history of the composition of what is perhaps Bahdanovič's best known poem *Sluckija ткаčychi* (The Weaver-women of Sluck). Number 12 of the journal contains three articles about Bahdanovič: *Z drukarni pana Martina Kuchty* (From the Printing Press of Master Marcin Kuchta) by the well-known contemporary Byelorussian poet Nił Hilevič (p. 123); *Skola paetaŭ* (The School of Poets) by the literary critic Michaś Smolkin (p. 131); and finally *Uspaminy pra brata* (Memoirs of a Brother) by the poet's cousin Hanna Vałasovič Hraznova (p. 126).

Another notable event in 1966 was the 90th anniversary of birth — and 50th of death, — of the Byelorussian poetess Ciotka. Lidzija Arabiej, who has already done much research into the life and works of Ciotka, in an article *Chvalujučaja staronka* (The Moving Page; No. 7, 134) writes about Ciotka's trip to Italy in 1908. The details of that trip she obtained from Ciotka's Lithuanian friend who accompanied her, Julia Biluniene. Siarhiej Paniznik in *Ciotka u Lvovie* (Ciotka in Lvov; No. 2, 152) writes about the poetess's life in that Ukrainian city during the years 1906-1911. Finally there are *Uspaminy pra Ciotku* (Reminiscences about Ciotka; No. 4, 128) by Uładziślava Łucevič (widow of Janka Kupała).

Ivan Navumienka in his *Paezija lubvi i nianavišci* (Poetry of Love and Hate; No. 6, 156) writes about the literary heritage of the greatest Byelorussian 19th century poet Francisak Bahuševič: also of interest is his second article *Pieračytvajučy Kupalu* (Re-reading Kupała, No. 10, 152). Michaś Bič in *U zmahanni za lepšuju dolu* (In the Struggle for a Better Life; No. 8, 132) sketches the history of the

Byelorussian weekly *Naša Dola* which appeared for a short time in 1906. The attitude of Russian official censorship towards *Naša Niva*, the well-known successor of *Naša Dola*, is the object of study of the article by Michaś Smolkin *Plamy carskaj cenzury* (The Blots of the Tsarist Censorship; No. 3, 145).

The most interesting study on the history of Byelorussian literature comes from the pen of Hienadź Kisialoŭ, who in his article *Arciom Dareŭski-Viaryha* (Nos. 4, 143 & 5, 163) gives a vivid and detailed picture of Byelorussian literary life in the Viciebsk district — and its most outstanding representative, — during the period immediately preceding the anti-Russian uprising of 1863.

Coming to more recent times, there is an article by the well-known poet Maksim Łužanin *Nataki pra sučasnuju paeziju* (Notes on Contemporary Poetry; No. 7, 141) in which the author takes a closer look at present-day Byelorussian poetry, and especially at the works of the younger poets. What he sees, gives him cause for an optimistic approach to the future. He looks forward to a rich poetical harvest in spite of difficulties, such as the fact that many young authors have no opportunity to study in the Byelorussian language. Janka Bryl in *Nieparadny ahlad* (Off-parade Review; No. 2, 166) is not so sanguine about the manner in which the Byelorussian short story is developing, and requires of young authors more work and re-thinking on the presentation of themes.

A lively controversy arose around the article of Uładzimir Karpaŭ *Pozirk nazad* (A Look Back; No. 3, 146). In it the author — who is a writer and literary critic, — made an attempt to assess the achievements of Byelorussian literature during the Soviet period. Among the writings he considered to belong to the "golden treasury" of Byelorussian literature he mentioned some works which were more remarkable for their strict adherence to the Party line than for their literary qualities. At the same time he criticised many contemporary writers for their subjectivist approach, or for confining themselves to the particular, and being unable to rise to general truths. Towards the end of his article there is a passage which sums up his entire attitude: "The struggle for ideological purity and for

party spirit in literature is at the same time the struggle for its artistic perfection. Those are two sides of the same medal."

The reaction against Karpaŭ's article was sharp and unfavourable. Articles by Aleš Adamovič *Ciažki žanr* (A Difficult Genre; No. 4, 155); Viktor Kavalenka *Pozirk nazad ci pavarot nazad?* (A Look Back or Turn Back?; No. 5, 129); Serafim Andrajuk *Nie zabvać pra tvorčuju indyvidualnasć* (One Must Not Forget an Author's Individuality; No. 4, 157); and Ryhor Škraba *Paćućcio stylu* (The Feeling of Style; No. 5, 138) — all have advanced the view that something more than impeccable political convictions are required from authors today.

Among the articles of general historical interest one should mention Jazep Jucho's *Statuty Vialikaha Kniastva Litoŭskaha* (Statutes of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania; No. 11, 125) and *Pra bielaruskich tatar* (On the Byelorussian Tartars; No. 1, 150) by Refik Muzafaraŭ. The second article is particularly interesting, as it shows how the comparatively small community of Tatars which settled in Byelorussia in the XIV-XVth centuries, could retain its identity, and at the same time make a valid contribution to Byelorussian culture. One need only mention their *Al Kitab*, or Muslim prayer book, written in the Byelorussian language but in Arabic characters. At the present time such men as the editor of the Byelorussian weekly *Niva* in Biełastok Matthew Kanapacki, the well known Byelorussian literary historian and critic Sciapan Aleksandrovič, a member of the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences Bekir Smolski and others are Byelorussian Tartars.

As the 50th anniversary of the proclamation of the Byelorussian Soviet Republic draws near (it was proclaimed on the 1st January 1919), more and more articles on this subject appear in the press. The articles by Vadzim Krutalevič in *Polymia* (Nos. 1, 132; 4, 106 & 9, 129) are very interesting as they are based on factual materials hitherto virtually unknown. Any reader ignorant of the dialectic Marxist rules of reasoning may be excused for gaining the impression from these articles, that the true manipulator of the Byelorussian Soviet Republic has always been the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party in Moscow, and that the role of

the Byelorussian Soviet government and of the Central Bureau of the hastily organised Byelorussian Communist Party (which before 1st January 1919 never existed) was to obey and implement orders. This was true to such an extent that they had to agree to the secession from the newly formed republic of the provinces of Viciebsk, Mahiloŭ and Smalensk and their annexation to the Russian Soviet Republic. It was also interesting to note that the Central Bureau of the Byelorussian Communist Party in January 1919 passed a resolution expressing the view that "the publication of a newspaper in the Byelorussian language must be considered as undesirable" (No. 9, 141).

For the second year running Michaś Kłyško publishes in the pages of *Polymia* his very valuable *Materjały da sloŭnika sinonimaŭ i blizkaznačnych sloŭ* (Material for a Dictionary of Synonyms and Related Words; Nos. 1, 2, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11). It is hoped that this significant work will be published soon in book form.

Finally one should mention an article by Victor Dajlida *Rodnaje slova ŭ škole* (The Native Language in School; No. 4, 163). The author — the headmaster of a Byelorussian secondary school in the Sluck district and teacher of the Byelorussian language, — describes the difficulty of teaching Byelorussian literature in Byelorussian schools, and in conclusion has this to say: "It happens thus: at a teachers' conference you take the floor and begin to speak in Byelorussian, and everybody looks at you as though you were an eccentric: Look at him, he is speaking Byelorussian ..."

"Why does this occur? Because we have neglected our native language. And it often happens that the school is Byelorussian only in name, while the teaching of all subjects is conducted in a non-Byelorussian language.

"In my opinion, the study of the Byelorussian language over the whole territory of Byelorussia should be compulsory. The parallel study of Russian and Byelorussian will complement one another. At the same time one cannot overestimate the value of the native language in the formation of Soviet patriotism."

Polymia is undoubtedly the most serious Byelorussian periodical publication today and its importance extends far beyond the field of lit-

erature. It is a matter of regret that it is not easily accessible to the general public: the number of copies published is very low, rarely exceeding 6000. When one considers that there are over 10 000 schools in Byelo-

russia, to say nothing of public libraries, it seems that even the majority of teachers of the Byelorussian language must do without this valuable publication.

A. N.

VIEŠCI AKADEMII NAVUK BSSR — Seryja hramadskich navuk (Proceedings of the Academy of Sciences of the BSSR — Social Science Section). A Quarterly. Minsk 1966.

Among the articles published in this journal the most interesting are undoubtedly those dealing with the history of the Byelorussian language. A. Żuraŭski in his article *Some problems connected with Byelorussian-Ukrainian linguistic links in the past* (No. 2, 79) examines the problems of the delimitation of Byelorussian and Ukrainian literary monuments in the XVI-XVIIth centuries. The subject is important in that it establishes the exact basis on which the literary language of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania developed. The author demonstrates the complexity of the problem — made more difficult by the very close relations existing between the two nation at that time, — and indicates the way towards its solution.

Particularly interesting are two articles by A. Bulyka: *The reflection of pronunciation in Middle Byelorussian orthography* (No. 1, 20) and *The Evolution of the graphic system of Middle Byelorussian orthography* (No. 2, 70). In the first article the author attempts to show how the phonetic characteristics of the living language were reflected in the deviations away from Church Slavonic orthography. In the second article he determines the rules of orthography observed by Middle Byelorussian writers, and examines the changing function of certain letters as well as the general trend of the change.

U. Aničenka contributes the article *Linguistic characteristics of the editions of F. Škaryna in the manuscript copy of V. Žuhajeŭ* (No. 1, 102) in which he compares the language of the works of the first Byelorussian printer with the language of a manuscript copy of his work made in the Ukraine in the second half of the XVIth century.

Finally A. Hruco publishes two studies on the development of the compound-dependent sentence in the Byelorussian language (No. 1, 112; No.

3, 88) illustrating his arguments with copious examples taken from Byelorussian written documents of the XIV-XVIIth centuries; whereas I. Čarko investigates the introduction of German words into the Middle Byelorussian vocabulary (No. 1, 120).

In the field of literary studies the article of I. Čyhryn *The Tales of Life of Jakub Kolas and Folklore* (No. 2, 54) is worthy of note. There is also an interesting article by U. Kazbjaruk *Bahuševič in Petersburg and the Ukraine* (No. 2, 63) which deals with two little known periods in the life of the most eminent Byelorussian poet of the XIXth century.

The recent advance of archaeology in Byelorussia is illustrated in the articles by Ł. Litoučanka *The Palaeolithic Settlement Birucy Bor* (No. 3, 110); M. Čarniaŭski on *The Neolithic Settlement Skema — I* (No. 1, 70); Ł. Pobal on *Ancient Glass Beads in the Caplina Dig* (No. 4, 75); and finally Ł. Pobal and A. Mitrafanaŭ on *Problems of the Settlement of the Slavs on the Territory of Byelorussia in the first Millenium A. D.* (No. 2, 43). The last article is interesting in that it shows the penetration of Slavs into the north-eastern part of the present-day Byelorussia, formerly populated by the Baltic tribes.

More than half of the space in the *Proceedings* is devoted to somewhat irrelevant works of dubious academic character. One is, perhaps understandably, a little nonplussed when confronted by an article of V. Cyparkoŭ entitled *Seasonal Differentiation of State Retail Prices for Potatoes and Vegetables* (No. 3, 45) which begins: "As a result of measures taken by the Party and Soviet Government with regard to the development of production of potatoes and vegetables, the provision of the town population of the Byelorussian SSR with these products has improved considerably..."

The *Proceedings* appears to be the

only Byelorussian language publication in which Byelorussian philologists, historians, archaeologists and others are able to publish the results of their

researches. It seems a pity to devote precious space to shopping-list statistics.

A. N.

MISCELLANEOUS PERIODICALS

Bielaruskaja Dumka (Byelorussian Thought), South River, N. J. 1966

Much of the single issue of this periodical is given over to political documentation of events in the United States. Poems and short stories are contributed by A. Sakovič (9/12-16), M. Kavyl (9/16-17), K. Juchnievič (9/17-20) and Ja. Juchnaviec (9/20-21).

There is a short article about the activities of the Byelorussian-American Choir "Kalina" (9/9).

Siaūbit (The Sower), Fort Edward N. Y. 1966.

The journal contains a few religious articles and some pious rhymes by Fr. Ioann Tarasievič.

Śvietač Chrystovaje Navuki (The Torch of Christ's teaching) Syracuse N. Y. 1966.

Pastor Piotroŭski contributes an article on "Culture in perspective" with some polemical material on Prof. Jan Stankievič (83/4-14; 84/4-7). H. Piotrowski deals with the partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (84/8-15), whereas George Piotrowski gives a brief history of the Byelorussian national movement (84/16-22).

Žnič (The Torch), Rome 1966.

Some biographical material is given relating to Fr. V. Onoško (1899-1966) (87/6-7) and St. Hrynkievič (1913-1966) (88/3-4).