

## Byelorussian Chronicle 1967

### I. The International Scene

#### I. GENERAL

In May the Byelorussian delegate to the United Nations L. Klackoŭ spoke at the General Assembly of the need to grant immediate independence to South-West Africa.

In June a delegation, headed by A. Šeldaŭ, took part in the 51st session of the International Labour Organisation in Geneva. Later in the year the Permanent Parliamentary Commission for Foreign Affairs (chairman L. Klackoŭ) recommended the Byelorussian Parliament to ratify the ILO convention's resolution concerning the leisure time of industrial workers.

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A Byelorussian delegation also took part in the sessions of the European Economic Commission of the United Nations in Geneva.

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On the 24th June the head of the delegation to the United Nations A. Hurynovič spoke at the General Assembly in support of the Arab states in the Arab-Israeli armed conflict. He spoke again in October in defence of the economic interests of the nations which had recently attained independence.

#### II. INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL EXCHANGES

##### The United Nations

From November to the end of December an exhibition of Byelorussian books was held in the United Nations Library in New York.

##### Armenia

A Byelorussian Film Festival took place in January in Erevan. The films shown included *Ja rodam z dziacinstva*, *Idu šukać*, *Kachanaja*, *Pišmy da žyvyeh*, *Alpijskaja balada* and others. There were also many documentary films.

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Days of Byelorussian Culture took place in Armenia between 5th and 11th October, with a full programme of concerts and exhibitions, as well as opportunities for meeting Byelorussian writers and artists.

##### Canada

The 28th September was Byelorussian Day at the International Exhibition 'Expo-67' in Montreal. Displays of books, works of art, souvenirs and industrial products, as well as a showing of films were arranged in the

Soviet pavillion. The highlight of the day was a concert given by the famous Byelorussian State Folk Instruments Orchestra under the direction of professor I. Zynovič, the Female Folk Song Quartet, the singers Tamara Šymko, Tamara Nižnikava, Arkadž Saučanka, Viktor Vujacič, the ballet dancers L. Kaščianieckaja, Nina Davidenka, N. Martynaŭ, Jaŭmień Paŭlovič and others. There was general praise for the high standard and skill of the Byelorussian artists. However, numerous Russian items in the repertoire of certain individual artists created the unfortunate impression that there was not enough Byelorussian material of a sufficiently high standard to fill the programme.

An additional Byelorussian concert was held on the 1st October.

##### England

An exhibition 'Nottingham — Minsk' was held in Nottingham on 16-26th March. It was organized by the local branch of the Anglo-Soviet Friendship Society and the Byelorussian section of the Soviet Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. Apart from a number of

nondescript photographs, children's drawings (signed in Russian) and souvenirs — some of them quite artistic — the most remarkable exhibits were large Intourist posters inviting the visitors to come and see Leningrad and Novgorod. There was no literature or information available on Minsk or, indeed, Byelorussia.

### France

Days of Byelorussian Culture organised by the France — USSR Society were held during the month of May. The Byelorussian State Folk Song Choir under H. Čitovič, together with singers Tamara Šymko, Sviatlana Daniluk, Ihar Sarokin, Zinovi Babij, the cymbalist Arkadž Astramiecki and ballet dancers Irena Savelina, Valantyn Davidaŭ and others toured several French cities with concert programmes. The places visited included Paris, Lyons, Clermont-Ferrand, Neuilly, Saint-Nazaire, Brest, Troyes and Rennes. The French press reviewed the concerts favourably and gave high praise to several individual artists. A large proportion of non-Byelorussian — and particularly Russian — items seemed rather out of place in a programme aiming to show Byelorussian cultural achievements to foreign audiences.

### East Germany

The singers Tamara Šymko and Ihar Sarokin sang for the first time in the Berlin Opera. They took part in performances of *Eugene Onegin* and *Rigoletto*.

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At the International Leipzig Fair Byelorussia was for the first time

represented by its own section. Byelorussian exhibits won 5 gold medals.

### Poland

In January a Byelorussian Film Festival was organised in Warsaw. The films shown ranged from the first Byelorussian film *Lasnaja byl* made in 1924 to such recent productions as *Dziaučynka Źukaje bački*, *Trećiaja rakietka* and *Čyrvonaje liście*.

The well known archaeologist Leamid Pobal has been in Poland on a research scholarship. On the 3rd February he gave a paper on the archaeology of Byelorussia to members of the Warsaw branch of the Byelorussian National Cultural Association in Poland.

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The famous Ahinski Song and Dance Ensemble from Smarhoni visited the Bielastok province with a programme of concerts in Bielastok, Hajnaŭka and Łomža. Everywhere they were given an enthusiastic reception.

### Russia

Days of Byelorussian Culture were held in Moscow from 30th August to 6th September with the usual programme of plays, concerts, exhibitions and encounters with Byelorussian writers and artists.

### Yugoslavia

The Byelorussian State Folk Dance Ensemble visited Yugoslavia in the summer, giving performances in Belgrade, Sarajevo, Skoplje and other cities.

## II. Events in Byelorussia

### MINSK

On 9-10th January the 4th Congress of the Byelorussian Theatrical Union took place in Minsk. In her chairman's address Łarysa Aleksandroŭskaja, the well known actress, summed up the achievements of the Byelorussian theatre during the past season. A considerable success was achieved in stage adaptations of the best Byel-

orussian novels, such as I. Mielež's *Ludzi na balocie* or I. Šamiakin's *Serca na daloni*. On the other hand there had been a lack of original plays specially written for the stage. No new Byelorussian opera had been produced since *Kalučaja ruža* (music by Ja. Siemianiaka) in 1960, although the Theatre of Opera and Ballet had

marked for production in the near future another opera by the same composer, *Apatajje liščie*. Choreography fared better with the creation of several original ballets on Byelorussian themes, such as *Mara* (music by J. Hlebaŭ), *Sviatlo i cieni* (music by H. Vahner), *Alpijskaja balada* (music by J. Hlebaŭ) and a new production of *Kniaź-voziera* (music by V. Załataroŭ). There had been several good television and radio play adaptations, and it was pleasant to hear in them good spoken Byelorussian. Then the speaker continued: 'Very often we witness, even in the Janka Kupała Theatre, the shabby attitude of actors towards our native word, the laws of our native tongue... The Byelorussian State Institute of Dramatic Art takes little account of the needs of the Byelorussian theatre. As a rule, the graduates of the Institute know the Byelorussian language very badly.'

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In January an exhibition of graphic art was held in Minsk with works by L. Dubaŭ, S. Herus, I. Misko, H. Papiłaŭski and N. Papiłaŭskaja, N. Bielski, J. Cichanovič, I. Radunski and others.

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Between the 11-14th April the Jakub Kołas Institute of Philology of the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences in Minsk organised an International Conference of Slavists. The subjects under discussion were typology, the history of the Slavonic languages and the relations between various Slavonic literatures. Slavists from Moscow, Leningrad, Vilna, Alma-Ata, Samarkand and other cities were present. The director of the Jakub Kołas Institute, M. Sudnik, acquainted the delegates with the work of Byelorussian Slavists. M. Łarčanka, professor of Byelorussian literature at Minsk University, read a paper on relations between various Slavonic literatures. F. Jankoŭski, dean of the Faculty of Byelorussian Language at the Minsk Pedagogical Institute, spoke on some of the problems of Byelorussian phraseology.

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A Festival of Amateur Theatres, Choirs and Song and Dance Ensembles was organized throughout Byelorussia, on both regional and national levels.

The best theatrical performance in the national festival was considered to be of the play *Raskidanaje hniazdo* by Janka Kupała, produced by the Mazyr Amateur Theatre. The Mahiloŭ Repertory Society staged the play *Muryn bor* by their own young playwright I. Isačanka. The staff and pupils of the Cimkavičy Secondary School revived the play *Hanka* by Uł. Hałubok, which was taken off the Byelorussian stage over thirty years ago, at the same time as its author disappeared. There were several remarkable performances of musical plays, amongst them D. Łukas's opera *Kastuś Kalinoŭski* produced by the Minsk Palace of Trade Unions Theatre, the comic opera *Rabinavyja karali* (music by J. Siemianiaka) by the Ašmiany Amateur Theatre and the musical comedy *Viasielle ŭ Malinaŭcy* by amateur actors from Baranavičy. A great success was scored by the Mahiloŭ Song and Dance Ensemble 'Uśmieška' which won an invitation to visit Bulgaria. However the group that won everybody's heart was the dance troupe from the village of Charoŭski in Mahiloŭ province with its magnificent performance of a charming and practically unknown Byelorussian folk dance *Husaryki*.

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In April Neville Dilks, the English conductor, visited Minsk where he directed the Byelorussian State Symphony Orchestra. Among the works performed was the Byelorussian composer J. Hlebaŭ's second symphony.

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'Melodies of Friends — 1967', an east European song contest, was held in Minsk in April. Artists from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, east Germany, Poland, Rumania and Yugoslavia took part.

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An arts festival called 'Spring in Minsk' took place between 20-28th May to commemorate the 900th anniversary of the Byelorussian capital. Apart from Byelorussian artists there were guests from Estonia (the famous *Laine* octet), Georgia, Russia and other countries.

At the art exhibition called 'My City' which was opened during the festival the works of over 90 painters

and sculptors were shown. Many works were on historical themes, among them the sculpture 'Prince Vasilok of Minsk' by Z. Azhur and the paintings 'Antiquity' by B. Malkin and 'Minsk 1067' by P. Maslanikaŭ. There was also an interesting composition called 'Minsk' in metal and plastic by O. Maryks.

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Days of Uzbek Culture were held in Minsk between 31st May and 10th June, with a full programme of plays, concerts, exhibitions and encounters with Uzbek writers and artists.

The Uzbek guests also visited Hrodna and Mahiloŭ.

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The Byelorussian Academy of Sciences held a special session on 16th August to commemorate 450 years of Byelorussian printing which was started in 1517 by the great humanist Francis Skaryna. The following papers were read: 'Byelorussia in the Time of Skaryna' by A. Hryckievič; 'Skaryna and his Work' by P. Hlebka; and 'Skaryna as a Philosopher' by V. Serbenta.

Among the foreign guests present was professor A. Florovský from Prague, one of the greatest living authorities on Skaryna. Other guests were from Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldavia, Turkestan and Uzbekistan.

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An exhibition entitled 'Byelorussian Industry and Aesthetics' opened in Minsk on 22nd August and remained open for three weeks.

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The Janka Kupała Academic Theatre opened its autumn season with the play *Paŭlinka* by J. Kupała. The season's repertoire included two new plays: *Hrešnaje kachaŭnie* by A. Dzialendzik and *Adkul hrech, adtul zbatilennje* by A. Pietraškievič.

The Theatre of Opera and Ballet opened its season with the première of J. Hlebaŭ's ballet *Alpijskaja balada* based on the novel of V. Bykaŭ.

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In December Days of French Culture were held in Minsk. The event was organized by the France — USSR Society.

At the same time there was an art

exhibition called 'French Impressions' consisting of works by Byelorussian artists who had recently visited France.

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The Council of Ministers of the BSSR placed under state protection several historical and artistic monuments, among them the Upper and Lower Castles and the Cathedral of Holy Wisdom in Połack, the Castle Hill Compound in Hrodna, the Old Town, the Church of the Transfiguration and Rahnieda's Tomb in Zasaŭ and the Castle and 'Graveyard' in Pinsk.

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The following state prizes were awarded for the year 1967: The Janka Kupała Prize for Literature (poetry) to Pimien Pančanka for his collection of poems *Pry ţviate malanak*. The Jakub Kołas Prize for Literature (prose) to Ivan Šamiakin for the novel *Serca na daloni* and the tetralogy *Tryvožnaje ţčaście*.

The Art Prize went to Vital Čvirka for a series of landscape paintings under the general title of 'The Byelorussian Land.' The Film Prize to Alaksiej Špiešnieŭ (script-writer), Uładzimir Korš-Sablin and Paval Armand (joint producers) and Andrej Buliński (director) for the film *Maskva — Hienuja*.

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Barys Płatonaŭ, one of the greatest Byelorussian actors, died on the 16th February. He had been actively associated with the Janka Kupała Theatre for 45 years.

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The writer Arkadž Čarnyševič died on the 18th January. His best known novel was *Zaţcienak Malinaŭka* (The Village of Noblemen, Malinaŭka).

#### B R E S T (*Bieraście*)

The Brest City Theatre was the first to produce the new play *Hrešnaje kachaŭnie* by the talented young playwright A. Dzialendzik. The same theatre was also first to produce Dzialendzik's first play, *Vyklik baham*.

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A Children's Art Festival took place in Brest in May. Apart from Byelorussian children there were many guests from Erevan, Belec, Kaunas,

Tartu, Leninabad, Lipeck and other cities of the USSR.

#### DRUCK

A new archaeological dig has been started in Druck, an ancient city which played an important role in Byelorussian history of the 11-12th centuries. The dig is being supervised by L. Alaksiejeŭ, author of the book *Polockaja Zemlja*.

#### HOMIEL

A local branch of the Union of Byelorussian Soviet Writers has been formed in Homiel. Many writers and poets live in the city, amongst them Ł. Haŭryłkin, M. Danilenka, A. Hračanikaŭ and J. Karšukoŭ. The literary historian P. Achrymienka, an authority on Byelorussian-Ukrainian literary relations, is Professor of Byelorussian Literature at the Homiel Pedagogical Institute.

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1967 saw the founding of the Homiel Philharmonic Orchestra.

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In August an exhibition of new works by local artists opened in Homiel. Among the artists who exhibited their works were V. Hračanau, V. Kazačenka, R. Landarski and J. Ivaniecki.

#### HRODNA (*Horadna*)

In April a Folk Art Exhibition took place in Hrodna. More than 400 sculptures, wood carvings, paintings and specimens of weaving made by the folk artists of the Hrodna region were shown.

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An exhibition of new works by Hrodna artists took place in August. The artists who exhibited their works included V. Savicki, A. Silvestraŭ, V. Suško, L. Nalivajka and others.

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Artists from nearby Poland are frequent guests in Hrodna. In autumn 1967 the theatre group *Kurpie zielone* visited Hrodna and certain other towns of the Hrodna province.

#### KOSAVA

This little town in Brest province is well known for its fine amateur choir and orchestra. Most famous, however,

are the *Kosava Musicians*, a family quintet consisting of Aŭhieñ Klimuš, his wife Aŭhińnia, their two daughters Luda and Tamara and young son Siarhieŭ. A recent success was their performance at the National Amateur Arts Festival in Minsk.

#### MAHILOŬ

The Mahiloŭ theatre produced two plays by local playwrights: *Muryn bor* by I. Isačanka and *Madryd nad Dniaprom* by J. Tarasaŭ.

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In summer the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences organized an ethnographical field-trip in the Mahiloŭ province.

#### MIKAŁAJEŬŠČYNA

A branch of the Jakub Kołas Museum was opened in the cottage 'Smolnia' on the outskirts of Mikałajeŭščyna, the native village of the great poet and the place where he lived after his release from the Russian prison in Minsk. It was in this cottage that the historic first meeting between him and Janka Kupała took place in 1912.

#### PASTAVY

A local historical and ethnographical museum has been opened in this town which is situated in the north-western part of the Byelorussian republic.

#### POŁACK (*Polacak*)

This most ancient of all Byelorussian cities is also the birthplace of the first Byelorussian printer Francis Skaryna. It is for this reason that the 450th anniversary of the first printing in Byelorussia was commemorated there with particular solemnity. The main celebrations took place on August 17th with the participation of many well known personalities, among them the Vice-President of the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences K. Atrachovič (the writer Kandrat Krapiva), professor A. Florovský from Prague, the Director of the Jakub Kołas Institute of Philology M. Sudnik, the Director of the Janka Kupała Institute of Literature V. Barysienka, the poets Ryhor Baradulin and Hienadz Buraŭkin — natives of the Połack region — and others.

On the next day a foundation stone was laid for a monument to Skaryna.

The Połack Museum — which is 150 years old and is considered to be one of the oldest museums in the whole Soviet Union — arranged an exhibition on Skaryna and his work.

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During building excavations in March the remains of a wall belonging to an 11th century house were discovered in this city.

#### S Ł U C K (*Slucak*)

The Sluck Secondary School is 350 years old. It was founded in 1617 by Prince Januš Radzivił and has had a rich and interesting history. Many of its pupils took part in the anti-Russian uprising of 1863, and the writer Alhierd Abuchovič (1840-1905) taught there for some time. At present the school has 650 pupils and among its alumni there are such eminent scientists as the surgeon professor M. Robuš, the zoologist professor A. Fia-dziušyn, academician I. Sjaržanin and others.

#### V I A L I K A J A     K R A K O T K A

The inhabitants of the village of Vialikaja Krakotka in western Byelorussia are justly proud of their fine library. It was founded forty years ago in 1927 and has had a rather

stormy history. In 1929 the Polish authorities (western Byelorussia was then under Polish occupation) closed it down, but on the night of closure some of the villagers broke into the building and took away all the books which were then distributed among various households. Thus the library continued to function clandestinely, and even managed to increase its stock of books.

#### V I C I E B S K

The Jakub Kołas Theatre in Viciebsk produced a new play *Vajna pad strechami* (War under the Roofs) based on the novel by Aleš Adamovič.

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In August an exhibition of new works by Viciebsk artists was held. The paintings of M. Michajlaŭ, A. Tołkač, A. Karžanieŭski, A. Ilnoŭ, F. Humien and others were exhibited.

#### V O Ł M A

The great Polish composer Stanisław Moniuszko was a native of the Minsk region of Byelorussia. He was born in 1819 in Ubiel which is now part of the collective farm Vołma. Recently a Moniuszko Museum has been opened and a memorial to the composer erected there.

### III. Events abroad

#### C A N A D A

A celebration to mark 450 years of Byelorussian printing was organized by the Byelorussian Canadian Alliance in Toronto on 17th September. An exhibition on Skaryna and his work was arranged with the help of Dr. V. Tumash from New York.

#### C Z E C H O S L O V A K I A

A course of Byelorussian literature has been introduced at the university of Brno. The lecturer is Martin Krhoun, a well known student of Byelorussian literature and folklore.

#### P O L A N D

According to statistics published in the Byelorussian weekly *Niva* there are 376,000 Byelorussians now living

in Poland. For the most part they are concentrated in the ethnically Byelorussian territories of the Biełastok province, but there are also colonies of Byelorussians in Warsaw, Gdańsk and other cities of western Poland.

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A conference of teachers of the Byelorussian language was held in Biełastok on March 19th. The problems connected with the teaching of Byelorussian language and history in Byelorussian schools in Poland, as well as in schools with Byelorussian as the secondary language, were discussed.

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A summer course for teachers of Byelorussian was organized in Bieła-

stok during the week beginning the 3rd August.

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The Faculty of Byelorussian at Warsaw University which has hitherto accepted only internal students has decided to also admit external students.

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A department of Byelorussian has been established at the college of education in Bielastok.

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An evening of the poetry of two Byelorussian poets living in Poland, Aleś Barski and Viktor Šved, was organized in Bielastok on May 24th. Both poets were present and read their works.

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The Byelorussian ethnographical museum in Bielavieža had 3561 visitors during the first four months of 1967. Many visitors came from the USSR, Germany, England, France and other countries.

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The ethnographical museum in Toruń has a rich Byelorussian section consisting of some 987 objects, mostly from the Hajnaŭka and Sakołka districts.

#### RUSSIA

In Gorkij the Association of Old Citizens of Nižnij Novgorod celebrated the memory of the great poet Maksim Bahdanovič (1891-1917) who lived there for the greater part of his life.

#### UKRAINE

The Historical Museum of L'vov University has set up a special section dedicated to the poetess Ciotka (pseudonym of Aloiza Paškievič, 1876-1916) who was a student there.

#### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

On 4th February the Byelorussian Institute of Arts and Sciences held in New York a session to commemorate the Byelorussian-Polish ethnographer and writer Aleksandar Jelski (1834-1916). Dr. V. Tumash read a paper on the life and work of Jelski, and A. Adamovič spoke on Jelski's translation of *Pan Tadeusz*.

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On 11th March the Byelorussian Institute of Arts and Sciences held a session to commemorate the first Byelorussian printer Francis Skaryna. Dr. V. Tumash spoke on Skaryna's original editions which can be found in the libraries of western Europe.

#### UNITED KINGDOM AND WESTERN EUROPE

The Association of Byelorussians in Great Britain held its 21st annual General Meeting. It is one of the oldest and best established Byelorussian emigré organizations, with branches and properties in London, Bradford and Manchester.

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The Headmaster of St. Cyril's House School in Finchley, London gave a dinner on 6th May to mark the feast of St. Cyril of Turaŭ. Among the guests present was the Rt. Rev. Bishop Česlaŭ Sipovič, the Apostolic Visitor for Byelorussian Catholics. Mr. A. B. McMillin read a paper on the 19th century translations of *Pan Tadeusz*.

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The London branch of the Association of Byelorussians in conjunction with the English poetry magazine *Manifold* organized an evening of poetry by Maksim Bahdanovič (1891-1917) in English translation by Miss Vera Rich. The evening took place on 13th May at St. Cyril's House School. Over 20 of the poet's works were read, among them *The Serpent King*, *In the Village*, *Romance*, *The Weaver-Women of Sluck*, *In Winter*, *Lavonica*, *The Chronicler* and *The Apocrypha*. The readers were Rosalind Greenwood, Diana Olsen, Rita Spurr, Elizabeth Ann Harvey, Bernard Dennis and John Nicholson.

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The Byelorussian Museum in London organized an exhibition to commemorate 450 years of Byelorussian printing. Later this exhibition was transferred to the Byelorussian Club in Manchester.

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During winter 1967-68 the Anglo-Byelorussian Society organized at the Royal Scottish Corporation in London a second course of lectures on Byelorussian culture. The speakers were professor R. G. A. de Bray ('Grammat-

ical Changes in Modern Literary Byelorussian'), A. B. McMillin ('The Development of the Modern Byelorussian Literary Language in the 19th Century'), G. Picarda ('Byelorussian Scholars in Western Europe from the 15th to the 17th Centuries' and 'The Administration of Justice in Byelorussia in the Grand Ducal Period') and Rev. A. Nadson ('The Slavonic Revival in 17th century Byelorussian Literature').

The Hon. John Jolliffe (a vice-chairman of the Anglo-Byelorussian Society) and Mrs. Jolliffe gave a

reception to mark the successful conclusion of the course.

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The Rt. Rev. Bolaslav Słoskan, Apostolic Administrator of the Catholic dioceses of Minsk and Mahiloŭ, now resident in Belgium, celebrated his golden Priesthood jubilee. A celebration in his honour took place in Louvain on 28th May in the presence of Byelorussians living in Belgium and the pupils of St. Cyril's House School in London.