

Byelorussian Chronicle 1970

I. The International Scene

I. GENERAL

Byelorussia was elected to membership of the Planning and Co-ordinating Committee of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

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The Byelorussian delegation to the 25th Assembly of the United Nations in New York which began on 15 September 1970 consisted of the Byelorussian Minister of Foreign Affairs A. Hurynovič (head), S. Šardyka, L. Kudraŭcava, V. Smirnoŭ, V. Panamaraŭ (members), S. Broŭnikaŭ, S. Hrekaŭ, I. Navumienka, A. Vasileŭ (deputies), H. Burko, H. Kavalenka, E. Palošyna, P. Bialajeŭ and V. Lisicki (counsellors).

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Byelorussia was re-elected to membership of the Commission on Women's Rights of the Economic and Social Council of the UNO.

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The head of the Byelorussian delegation at the General Assembly of the United Nations, A. Hurynovič, spoke on 30 September. In his speech he stressed the need for UNO, now

celebrating its 25th anniversary, to make more strenuous efforts towards securing world peace and banning the production and storage of chemical and bacteriological weapons.

Other members of the Byelorussian delegation who spoke at various committee meetings of UNO included the writer I. Navumienka, L. Kudraŭcava and O. Paškievič.

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The Byelorussian delegation to the 54th Session of the ILO in Geneva was headed by A. Šeldaŭ. Other members of the delegation were F. Hilicki, V. Ivanoŭ, V. Ražkoŭ (members), A. Vasileŭ and I. Sacharaŭ (counsellors).

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The Byelorussian Minister of Culture, M. Minkievič, spoke at a session of UNESCO held in Paris on 23 October. In his speech he noted that UNESCO pays too little attention to the question of world peace and security, and the struggle against apartheid.

II. INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL RELATIOS

Armenia

The Byelorussian State Folk Choir under the direction of Professor I. Žynovič visited Armenia in March. It gave concerts in Erevan, Leninakan, Kirovokan and Alaverdi.

Estonia

A festival of plays for children of the Baltic States and Byelorussia took place in Tallin in June. The Byelorussian Youth Theatre presented *Cudoŭnaja dudka* (The Magic Flute) by Vital Volski.

Germany

In November a photographic exhibition from the Byelorussian Soviet Republic was opened in Dortmund. The exhibition illustrated the development of science, industry and culture in present-day Byelorussia.

Italy

At the International Children's Film Festival in Venice, the Byelorussian film *Ivan Makarovič* was awarded first prize, the 'Silver Minerva'.

Russia

In November a Byelorussian Art Exhibition was opened in Smolensk organised by the Byelorussian State Art Museum. Over one hundred works by contemporary Byelorussian painters and sculptors were shown.

II. Events in Byelorussia

According to the Soviet census which was held on 15 January 1970, the present-day population of the Byelorussian Soviet Republic is 9,002,000 of which 7,290,000 are Byelorussians. Of the remaining inhabitants 938,000 are Russians, 383,000 Poles, 191,000 Ukrainians, 148,000 Jews, and 52,000 members of other ethnic groups.

The total number of Byelorussians in the Soviet Union is 9,052,000 of which 1,762,000 live outside the Byelorussian Soviet Republic. Byelorussians living in the Russian Soviet Federal Republic number 964,000. There are 386,000 Byelorussians living in the Ukraine, 198,000 in Kazakhstan, 95,000 in Latvia, 45,000 in Lithuania and 19,000 in Estonia.

Only 80.6 per cent of all Byelorussians living in the Soviet Union, i. e. 7,293,000 consider Byelorussian their native tongue; others presumably speak Russian. The statistics do not supply information about the geographical distribution of those Byelorussians who have forgotten their native language, but one cannot help noticing that their number almost coincides with the number of Byelorussians living outside the Byelorussian Soviet Republic. This is hardly surprising, for while there are several Russian schools in Byelorussia, there is not even one Byelorussian school outside the BSSR.

MINSK

The Janka Kupała Poetry Prize for 1970 was awarded to Arkadz Kulašoŭ for his translations of the Russian poet Lermontov, the Ukrainian Kotlja-ryskyj and the American Longfellow.

The Art Prize was awarded to the sculptor A. Bembel and the architect A. Stachovič for their project on the memorial complex *Kurhan stavy*.

The composer J. Hlebaŭ was awarded the State Music Prize for his music for the ballet *Vybrańnica*,

Poland

At the 2nd International Congress of Translators from Polish Literature which took place in Warsaw in October, the well-known Byelorussian writer Janka Bryl, who attended the Congress, was awarded a decoration for services to Polish culture.

based on the works of Janka Kupała, and for the oratorio *Sviaci, zara*.

L. Rachlenka, an actor of the Janka Kupała Theatre, was awarded the prize for the Best Actor of the Year.

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A new exhibition of the achievements of the Byelorussian economy was opened in the Minsk Exhibition Hall on 2 January.

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In February a Moldavian music festival was held in Minsk.

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A preview of the new film about the great 16th-century printer and scholar Francis Skaryna, *Ja Francysk Skaryna* took place in February. The film, produced by the studio *Biela-rušfilm*, was directed by B. Ściapanau. The script was by M. Sadkovič and the rôle of Skaryna was played by A. Jankoŭski.

At the preview the critics noted with satisfaction the movement by Byelorussian film producers towards national historical themes, but were critical of the way in which Skaryna and his times were presented in the film.

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On 17 April Michael Sudnik, Director of the Jakub Kołas Institute of Philology, was elected an associate fellow of the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences.

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The Festival of Soviet Films took place in Minsk between 13 and 22 May. The Byelorussian entry consisted of the films *Ja, Francysk Skaryna* and *Ivan Makaravič*.

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The Polish ambassador to the USSR, Jan Ptasiński, visited Minsk on 25 June, where he presented high military decorations to certain former Soviet commanders who during the war fought for the liberation of Poland. He also visited the Janka

Kupała and Jakub Kołas Literary Museums. The Byelorussian deputy Prime Minister, A. Zolaŭ, gave a dinner in honour of the ambassador.

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The Secretary-General of UNO, U Thant, visited Minsk on 19-20 June. He was received by the Byelorussian Prime Minister, S. Kisialoŭ, who gave a dinner in his honour.

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In February a symposium, 'The Image of the Worker in Our Multi-national Literature' was held in Minsk. Writers and literary critics from Byelorussia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia and the Ukraine took part.

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A centre for training scientists from the COMECON countries has been opened at the Institute of Mass and Heat Exchange in Minsk.

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On 31 July Vasil Bandarčyk, Director of the Institute of Ethnography at the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences, was awarded the honorary diploma of the Byelorussian Supreme Soviet (Parliament) in recognition of his outstanding merits in the development of Byelorussian science. The award was made on the occasion of Bandarčyk's 50th birthday.

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The Hungarian ambassador to the USSR, Djulo Rapai, visited Minsk between 6 and 8 July.

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On 16 August Minsk airport became international with the opening of a direct Minsk-Berlin line.

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The 14th International Conference of Agricultural Economists was held in Minsk between 24 August and 2 September. Eight hundred scientists from all over the world took part.

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The Janka Kupała State Theatre in Minsk began its new season on 5 September with the traditional comedy *Paŭlinka* by Janka Kupała. This was a special season as it marked the 50th anniversary of this, the oldest and most popular of all Byelorussian theatres. The celebration of this event was held in November when the theatre presented a series of old favourites from its rich repertoire. New works were by no means neglected. They were represented by the comedy *Amnistyja* by M. Matukoŭski

and the drama *Načnoje dziažurstva* by A. Dzialendzik.

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The Byelorussian State Theatre of Opera and Ballet presented a new opera, *Zorka Venera*, based on the life of the poet Maksim Bahdanovič. The music was composed by Jury Siemianiaka and the libretto by the poet Aleś Bačyła. This is the third opera by Siemianiaka performed by the Theatre, the first two being *Kalučaja ruža* and *Kali apadaje liście*.

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On 7 October a trades union delegation from the Republic of Mongolia visited Minsk.

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A Parliamentary delegation from the German Democratic Republic visited Minsk from 2 to 4 November. President S. Prytycki gave a reception in their honour.

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Days of Finnish culture were held in Minsk between 9 and 14 November. The Finnish delegation was headed by the Minister of Culture M. Kalavajnen.

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On 24 November the Byelorussian composer Jaŭhieŭ Cikocki died at the age of 77. Among his best known works are the musical drama *Michaś Padhorny* and the opera *Alesia*.

Cikocki possessed a very valuable collection of periodical publications comprising over 13,000 titles, many of them from before the First World War. Before his death he presented it to the Byelorussian State Archives of Literature and Art.

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The Byelorussian playwright A. Makajonak, who recently celebrated his 50th birthday, was awarded the order of the 'Workers' Red Flag' by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in recognition of his services in the development of Soviet culture. He is editor-in-chief of the Russian-language monthly *Neman* which is published in Minsk.

A NOŠKI

The family quartet of the Maciejkovič family is well-known outside their native village of Anoški (in the Vilejka district). It consists of Vaciaŭ Maciejkovič, the local blacksmith who plays the accordion, his wife Halina (tambourine), his brother

Tadeuś (cymbalom) and uncle Alojza Ciurlik who is an accomplished violinist. The quartet has performed in Vilejka and Minsk.

B A B R U J S K

A new theatre has opened in this ancient Byelorussian city. The actors are for the most part young graduates of the Byelorussian Institute of Dramatic Art in Minsk. The director of the theatre is Viktor Karalko.

B I A Ł Y N I Č Y

The famous Byelorussian painter Vitaūta Białynicki-Birula (1872-1957) was born in the village of Krupki near Białyniły. Now a museum devoted to the artist has been opened in Białyniły. It contains twenty-three works by Białynicki-Birula as well as paintings by the artists Z. Paūhoŭski, M. Daūhiała, I. Karasioŭ, the sculptors I. Miško, V. Kazak and others.

B I E R A S T O V I C A

A friendly meeting between Byelorussians of the Hrodna region and the inhabitants of the neighbouring Białystok region in Poland took place in Bierastovica (Hrodna region) on 10 May.

B R E S T

'Days of Local Literature' were held in the Brest region in November. The poets and writers J. Siemiażon, S. Hrachouŭski, Uł. Kaleśnik, J. Bryl and others visited Brest. Literary evenings were also held in the towns of Baranaviły and Pinsk, which were visited by A. Aleksandrovič, A. Łojka, J. Śvirka and others.

F R A N O P A L

The old dyke near the village of Franopal (Brest region) was thought by the local inhabitants to date from the time of the anti-Russian uprising of T. Kościuszko in the late 18th century. However, recent excavations under the direction of the archaeologist P. Łysienka from Minsk have established that the dyke constitutes the remains of a primitive settlement more than 1,000 years old. It is now classified as one of the archaeological monuments of Byelorussia.

H Ł Y B O K A J E

In March an exhibition of folk art was held in the local Palace of Cult-

ure. The exhibits — handwoven bedspreads, carpets, embroidered towels etc. were the handwork of local village women: N. Malej, S. Iljinčyk, T. Redźka, Z. Vańkovič and others.

H O M I E L

The Homiel Regional Museum is situated in an old house in the park, with a tower which was restored after the war. The old clock on the tower was also restored, but it received a new chime — the popular tune of the song *Lublu naś kraj* played on the *cymbaty*. The chime was constructed by Jaūhień Śčakudaŭ, a local amateur mechanic.

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Homiel, which is situated on the river Soż, is rapidly becoming an important academic centre in eastern Byelorussia. The Byelorussian Academy of Sciences is opening a branch there, following the opening of Homiel University in 1969.

H O R K I

A conference of Byelorussian sociologists on 'Changes in the Social Structure of the Village during the Soviet Period' was held between 29 and 31 January at the Byelorussian Agricultural Academy in Horki (Mahiloŭ region).

H R O D N A

A conference of Soviet museum workers was held in Hrodna between 9 and 13 February.

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In March the Central Committee of the Byelorussian Communist Party in conjunction with the Hrodna regional committee organised a conference on 'The National Policy of the Communist Party'.

Papers read included: 'The Work of the Communist Party of Byelorussia for the Realisation of Leninist Principles in National Politics', 'The Work of the Communist Party of the USSR for Liquidation of National and Economic Inequalities among Nations' and 'The Formation of National Intellectual *Cadres* in Hrodna and its Environs during the Soviet Period'.

It may be noted that the Hrodna regional newspaper, *Grodnenskaja pravda*, is published in Russian.

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The Janka Kupała Theatre spent its summer season in the Hrodna region. Altogether it gave seventeen performances in Hrodna, Vaŭkavysk, Masty and other towns. Among the most popular plays were *Paŭlinka*, *Lavonicha na arbicie* and *Ludzi na balocie*.

KAMIANIEC

The small town of Kamianiec (Brest region) in the extreme west of the Byelorussian Soviet Republic is well-known throughout the country, both as the gateway to the famous Bielavieža Forest and because of its 13th-century keep, the *Bielaja wieža* (White Tower), a remarkable example of early Byelorussian military architecture. After years of neglect the keep is now in the course of restoration and will house the local historical museum.

PSIARCY

An unusual choir has been formed in the village of Psiarcy (near Ščučyn, Hrodna region). It is a choir of traditional folk singers, and is made up entirely of old age pensioners — H. Markievič, V. Publicievič, M. Daškievič and others. Jazep Zubryk, who provides the accordion accompaniment, is 83 years old. The choir enjoys great popularity in their own and neighbouring villages.

RUDZIENSK

Rudziensk in the Puchavičy district of the Minsk region is the native town of one of the best known Byelorussian poets of the 1920s and early 30s, Michaś Čarot, who died in 1938 after being arrested at the age of 42. A museum devoted to the poet has been opened at the local secondary school. Many interesting exhibits were presented by Čarot's sister, V. Davydoŭskaja, who still lives there.

The Rudziensk school may be justly proud of its former pupils, whose number include such well-known contemporary writers as Hienadž Klaŭka, Uładzimir Lapioškin, Uładzimir Mažejka and others.

SIAMIONY

In the summer the Institute of Ethnography of the Byelorussian

Academy of Sciences organised an expedition to the districts of Ašmiany and Astraviec in western Byelorussia and in the neighbouring districts of the Lithuanian SSR inhabited by Byelorussians. The expedition was very successful, and its members brought back with them recordings of over 1,200 new songs, tales, legends and ballads. They also made interesting discoveries; for example, they were able to record for the first time in many years the original funeral lamentation from Jadviha Adamkovič in the village of Paluš in the Astraviec district. Eighteen year old Ludmiła Machno from the village of Kaścielniki in the same district surprised everyone with her knowledge of traditional local folk-songs. But the greatest discovery was the song *Žnivo* (Harvest), sung by Alena Pavojeć from the village of Siamiony in the Ašmiany region. According to Hienadž Citovič, the Director of the Byelorussian State Folk Ensemble, it is one of those rare jewels, of which there are perhaps only ten in the rich treasury of Byelorussian folk songs.

ŠVICIAŽ

Lake Šviciaž and its environs near Navahrudak is one of the most beautiful corners of Byelorussia. It has been immortalised in the works of the great Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz who was born not far from there. Now the government of the Byelorussian Soviet Republic has declared Lake Šviciaž and 1,077 hectares (nearly 3,000 acres) of the surrounding forest to be a nature reserve, thus placing this beauty spot under the protection of the State.

ŽUPRANY

The greatest Byelorussian poet of the 19th century, Francišak Bahuševič (1840-1900), was buried in the town of Župrany in the Ašmiany region. Now the pupils of the local secondary school have organised a Bahuševič Museum there. They were helped by the literary historians Adam Maldzis and Hienadž Kisialoŭ and by the editor of the Byelorussian weekly in Poland *Niva*, H. Vaŭkavycki, who gave their advice and offered several interesting exhibits.

III. Events Abroad

CANADA

In Toronto there exists a Byelorussian Publishing Club *Pahonia*. Founded five years ago, it has already published several books in Byelorussian and English, among them the works of K. Akaŭa, a Byelorussian writer now living in Canada. It has also issued a number of gramophone records of Byelorussian folk music.

FRANCE

On 29 May Nicholas Abramčyk, President of the Council of the Byelorussian National Republic in exile, died in Paris after a long illness at the age of 67.

POLAND

According to the official Polish statistics for the year 1968/69, there were 12,283 children studying in Byelorussian schools in Poland. The corresponding number for the year 1965/66 was 11,649. Thus, Byelorussian school children are the largest scholastic group amongst the ethnic minorities in Poland, and one which tends to increase. The next group are Ukrainian children who number 2,108 (2,418 in the year 1965/66). The number of children attending Lithuanian schools is 773 (882 in 1965/66).

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On 19 February a meeting was held in Białystok between representatives of the Byelorussian National Cultural Association in Poland and the Polish educational authorities on methods of work among Byelorussian children who attend Polish schools.

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The activities of the Byelorussian National Cultural Association are not limited to the ethnically Byelorussian parts of the Białystok region. It also has active branches in other Polish towns where Byelorussians live, notably Warsaw and Gdańsk.

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Sakrat Janovič, a Byelorussian writer living in Poland, has been elected a member of the Union of Polish Writers. His collection of novels, *Zahony* (Białystok, 1969), was

received with acclaim by both Byelorussian and Polish critics. Janovič is the second Byelorussian writer to become a member of the Union of Polish Writers, the first being the poet and literary historian Alaksandar Barščeŭski.

Byelorussian writers in Poland have their own union called 'Biełavieža'.

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The 'Mahiloŭ Chronicle' is an interesting and important manuscript document which was written by several persons in succession over a period of two centuries. It was started in the 17th century by a Mahiloŭ burgher, Trafim Surta, and then continued by another burgher, Jury Trubnicki, and his successors, the last entry being made by Ivan Trubnicki in 1864. Then the original manuscript disappeared and was considered lost, the only known existing form of the chronicle being an abridged version in Russian translation published in 1887. Recently a Byelorussian scholar from Mahiloŭ, Jerome (Hieranim) Filipovič, has succeeded in tracing the original copy of the chronicle which is now in the possession of the heirs of the Trubnicki family, who live in Poland. (H. R. 18 May 1970).

UNITED KINGDOM

On 17 January a new Byelorussian club, 'Sakavik', was opened in Bradford by the Lord Mayor of Bradford, Alderman Edward Newbey.

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During the academic year 1970-71 the fifth course of lectures on Byelorussian culture took place in London. It was organised by the Anglo-Byelorussian Society, and the lectures were held at the Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House. The speakers were the Rt Rev. Dr Č. Sipovič, tit. Bishop of Mariamme ('The Language Problem in the Catholic Church in Byelorussia during the Second Half of the 19th Century'), James Dingley of the University of Reading ('The Armies of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 16th Century'), Guy Picarda ('The *Podobny* Texts and Chants of the

Supraśl *Irmologion* (1601)' and 'The Courts of Customary Law in Byelorussia, their Structure, Jurisdiction and Rules of Procedure') and Alexander Nadson ('The Writings in Arabic Script of the Byelorussian Tartars' and 'Some Phonetic and Morphological Features of the Living Byelorussian Language in the Literary Documents of the 16th-17th Century').

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At the annual St. Cyril's House School dinner on 3 May, Mr Guy Picarda read a paper entitled 'The History of the Byelorussian Settlements in England before the First World War'.

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The Chairman of the Anglo-Byelorussian Society, Mr Auberon Herbert, gave a reception for the members of the Society and their guests at the Anglo-Belgian Club on 16 June.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

On 17 June Archbishop Basil Tamašcyk of the Byelorussian Orthodox Church in exile died suddenly in New York.

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Another death was that of Nicholas P. Vakar, Professor of History at the

University of Ohio. His works, *Belorussia, the Making of a Nation* and *Bibliographical Guide to Belorussia* (both published in 1956) excited much criticism at the time, but contributed greatly to the spread of knowledge about Byelorussia in the English-speaking world.

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The Byelorussian Institute of Arts and Sciences held several meetings in New York, during which papers by various members were read, among them 'The First Printing Presses after Skaryna in Vilna' by Dr V. Tumaš, 'Byelorussian National Bibliography' by Dr V. Kipiel and 'The Four-volume History of Byelorussian Literature, published in Minsk' by Dr S. Stankievič.

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The 9th Meeting of Byelorussians in North America (USA and Canada) was held in New York between 5 and 7 September. The problems of Byelorussian publications and Byelorussian schools in America were discussed.

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On 28 November a concert was held in Chicago in memory of the composer Mikoła Kulikovič, who died the previous year.

