

Byelorussian Chronicle 1971

I. The International Scene

I. GENERAL

The Byelorussian delegation consisting of the Byelorussian Minister of finances, B. Šaciła, with V. Hančarenka and S. Chmialnicki took part in the session of the European Economic Commission of the UN in April in Geneva.

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The Byelorussian delegation to the 26th Assembly of the United Nations consisted of the Byelorussian Minister of Foreign Affairs, A. Hurynovič

(Head), with H. Žabicki, V. Smirnoŭ, M. Dzialec, M. Kałačynski (members), A. Harbačova, B. Kudraŭcoŭ, A. Rašočka and H. Niastrebka (deputies).

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On 11 October the Byelorussian Foreign Minister A. Hurynovič spoke at the General Assembly of the UN in New York on the subject: 'The need to strengthen peace and security of the nations'.

II. INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL EXCHANGES

Bulgaria

The Byelorussian State Circus made a successful tour of Bulgaria in the summer.

Czechoslovakia

A. V. Łykaŭ, director of the Institute of Heat and Mass Exchange of the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences, was awarded the gold medal of the Czechoslovak Society for International Relations.

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The Baranavičy song and dance ensemble *Juračka* took part in the festival of amateur art groups of the Socialist countries, which was held in Prague.

France

An exhibition of Byelorussian graphic art was held in Lyon. Altogether 52 works by 22 artists were shown. The artists who exhibited their works included A. Łoś, N. Papiłaŭskaja, H. Papiłaŭski, Ł. Asiecki and others.

Italy

The Martini cup for fencing was won by the Byelorussian, Alena Bialova.

Poland

The Hrodna song and dance ensemble *Nioman* (120 artists) visited the Białystok province in the summer.

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One of the highlights of the 11th International Music Festival *Sopot-71*, which was held in Sopot in August, was the performance of the Byelorussian 'pop' group *Pieśniary*. It received enthusiastic press reviews. This was the group's first appearance outside the Soviet Union.

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The well-known Byelorussian literary historian Adam Maldzis visited Poland in November. At the invitation of the Byelorussian Association in Poland he made visits to Gdansk, Białystok, Bielsk, Orla, Michajłowo and Hajnaŭka, where he gave talks and lectures. The Byelorussian writer Pilip Piestrak also visited Białystok in November.

Russia

Among the award-winning entries at the Soviet childrens' film festival which was held in Moscow in May there was the Byelorussian film *Palanez Ahinskaha* (Oginski Polonaise).

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The Byelorussian season at the Bolshoy Theatre in Moscow took place on 7-26 July. The Byelorussian State Theatre of Opera and Ballet showed several outstanding Byelorussian works, among them the new opera *Zorka Venera* (music by Jury Siemianiaka, words by Aleš Bačyła) based on the life of the poet Maksim Bahdanovič, and the ballet *Vybrannica* (music by Ja. Hlebaŭ, written on the motifs of Janka Kupała's poems.

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The Byelorussian musicians and composers R. Šyrma, H. Citovič, A. Bahatyroŭ and L. Mucharynskaja took part in the 7th International Music Congress which was held in Moscow in October. The Congress was organised by UNESCO and its subject was 'The musical culture of the peoples: tradition and the present day'. The delegates of the Congress had the opportunity to hear ethnographical choirs from the now famous 'singing villages' of Toniež, Bukča and

Kletnaja in Byelorussian southern Palessie.

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A decade of Byelorussian literature was held in Magnitogorsk in March. Among those taking part were the Byelorussian writers and poets Janka Bryl, Vasil Vitka, Siarhiej Hrachousik, Uładzimir Karatkievič, and the literary critic Aleš Adamovič.

Turkey

The products of the Mazyr factory of artistic objects enjoyed great popularity at the International Trade Fair in Izmir. Especially popular were the ceramic wares with designs by the local artist M. Puškar, and the weavings of V. Harbačuk.

Ukraine

The Byelorussian State Orchestra of folk instruments, directed by Prof. J. Žynovič, made a tour of the Ukraine and Moldavia.

II. Events in Byelorussia

Minsk

A group of scholars headed by R. A. Avaniesau, K. Atrachovič (the poet and playwright Kandrat Krapiva) and J. Mackievič were awarded the Soviet State Prize for their outstanding work in the field of Byelorussian linguistics, in particular for producing the Dialectological Atlas of the Byelorussian Language.

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Two of the best known Byelorussian present-day novelists, Ivan Mielež and Ivan Šamiakin, were both awarded one of the highest Soviet decorations, the Order of the Red Flag, on the occasion of their 50th birthday.

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The New State Theatre of Musical Comedy opened in Minsk on 17 January. On its first night it presented the comedy *Špiavajuć žavaraniki* (The skylarks sing) by the composer Jury Siemianiaka.

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The Byelorussian State University in Minsk, founded in 1921, celebrated its 50th anniversary.

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A New Institute of Geochemistry and Geophysics of the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences was formed on the basis of the already existing Geochemical Laboratory, and the Geophysical Observatory at Pleščany, the only one of its kind in the western part of the USSR.

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The Jakub Kołas Institute of Linguistics of the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences held in January a conference to commemorate the centenary of the publication of the Byelorussian dictionary by I. Nasovič. At the same time the Byelorussian State Library organised an exhibition of books illustrating the development of the study of Byelorussian from the 16th century to the present day.

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A popular music festival *Bielaruski suvenir* took place at the Minsk Sports Palace in March. Among the groups taking part there was the *Pieśniary* who earlier won the first prize at the music festival in Moscow. Under the direction of Uładzimir Mulavin, who himself is a composer

and arranges all the music, the group specialises in the modern interpretation of traditional Byelorussian folk motifs, and in music by contemporary Byelorussian composers.

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Delegates attending the meeting of the World Meteorological Organization in Moscow visited Byelorussia on 31 March — 1 April. They were shown the hydrometeorological centre in Minsk and the unified hydrometeorological station at Stoŭbcy.

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A song contest of the Baltic countries and Byelorussia took place in Minsk in April. Among the prize-winners were the students of the Byelorussian State Conservatory Anatol Padhajski and Michaś Zdanievič, and the soloist of the theatre *Estonia*, Mati Palm.

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The 6th Congress of the Union of Byelorussian Soviet Writers took place in Minsk on 26-27 April. Several speakers — E. Loś, V. Kavalenka, A. Asipienka, I. Mieleż, N. Hilevič and others — spoke about the difficulties of publishing Byelorussian books in Byelorussia, and stressed the need for a special publishing house for works of Byelorussian literature. The editor of the monthly *Matadośč*, Aleś Asipienka, drew attention to the predicament of young authors: 'In recent years the publication of works of young writers has encountered innumerable difficulties. Many of them wait three or four years and even longer for their first book to be published'. Nil Hilevič described the general situation in the following terms: 'The works of our prose writers are published in their native (i.e. Byelorussian — *ed.*) language in 7-10 thousand copies, and then the same works are published again by our publishing houses in Russian translation in 100 thousand copies. The bulk of these books remain here in Byelorussia. But why? What are the guiding principles of our publishers and book-selling organisations? According to the latest population census 80 per cent of the Byelorussians consider Byelorussian as their native tongue. Let us then make necessary conclusions from these figures'.

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The Polish Prime Minister P. Jaroszewicz visited Minsk on 22-23 May.

He was accompanied by the Soviet ambassador to Poland Stanisław Piłatovič, who is a Byelorussian.

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Members of the Finnish delegation of the Soviet-Finnish commission for scientific and technical cooperation visited Minsk on 3 June.

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A Bulgarian Trade Union delegation visited Minsk on 8 June.

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The election to the parliament (Supreme Soviet) of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic took place on 13 June. All the 425 candidates, one for each constituency, were elected. The total number of voters was 5,874,561 or 99.98 per cent of the electorate. Of this number 5,871,319 or 99.94 per cent voted for the candidates and 3,238 against.

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The Janka Kupała Institute of Literature of the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences held in September a conference on the subject 'Problems of style in Modern Byelorussian literature'.

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The Soviet television film festival took place in Minsk on 1-10 October. Byelorussian entries were the prize-winning film *Usia karaleŭskaja rač* (All the king's men) and *Razmova pra ziamlu* (Dialogue about the earth).

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A delegation from Nottingham, headed by the Lord Mayor, visited Minsk in October. Nottingham and Minsk are 'twin' cities.

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Teachers' delegations from the German Democratic Republic and from Iran visited Minsk in October and November. The delegates had the opportunity to study the organisation of education in Byelorussia.

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An exhibition of books from the German Democratic Republic was held in Minsk on 5-15 October. Among the exhibits there was also the anthology of Byelorussian short stories in German translation, *Störche über den Sümpfen*, published a few months earlier in Berlin.

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On 4-5 October, the 2nd Congress of the Byelorussian Voluntary Asso-

ciation for the Protection of Historical and Cultural monuments was held in Minsk. According to the report of its president, I. Klimau (The Vice-President of the Byelorussian SSR), the Association, which was founded in 1968, now has 967,292 members. During the years 1968-70 the Association, in cooperation with other competent organizations and institutions, carried out the registration of all monuments of historical and cultural interest on the territory of Byelorussia. Altogether 12,450 monuments have been registered; of these 314 monuments of Lenin, 4,940 monuments of the so-called revolutionary military and working glory (practically all dating from the last war and the post-war period), 23 monuments of Russian military glory, 6,142 archaeological objects, 525 monuments of architecture, 206 monuments of art, and 300 monuments of ethnographical interest. All monuments belonging to the first three categories are state protected. Of the rest only 790 monuments of archaeological and 78 of architectural interest enjoy state protection, and none of the artistic or ethnographical groups.

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Kandrat Krapiva (real name Kandrat Atrachovič), the well-known Byelorussian poet, playwright and scholar, is 75 years old. As a writer he became first known as an author of witty fables and plays, the most famous of which is most probably the comedy *Chto smiajecca apošnim* (Who laughs last), written in 1939. For a long time Krapiva was the head of the Institute of Linguistics of the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences, and was the general editor of several important works on the Byelorussian language, among them the 'academic' Grammar of the Byelorussian Language and the Byelorussian-Russian Dictionary. He is now Vice-President of the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences and has the title of People's Writer of Byelorussia.

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Siarhieŭ Prytycki, President of the Byelorussian SSR, died after a long illness on 13 June. He was 59. The new President of the Byelorussian SSR is F. A. Surhanaŭ.

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Uładzimir Uładamirski (Malejka), one of the greatest names in Byelorussian theatre, died in January at the age of 78. He had been a member of the Janka Kupała Theatre since 1924.

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The writer Janka Maur (Ivan Fiodaraŭ) died on 3 August. He was 88. He was the pioneer of the Byelorussian adventure story for children and young people. His best book, *Paleskija Rabinzony* (The Robinsons of Palešsie), written in 1930, has enjoyed great popularity among young readers to the present day.

A Z I E R Š Č Y N A (Rečyca district)

The village choir of Azierščyna is well-known throughout Byelorussia and outside it. It began 35 years ago with the appearance on the local radio Rečyca of the family choir from that village, consisting of 11 Łapaciny sisters and cousins. The founder was Taćciana Łapacina, a peasant woman from Azierščyna, endowed with outstanding musical talent and profound knowledge of Byelorussian folk songs which permitted her not only to execute the old songs but to create new ones in the traditional manner. She has remained the moving spirit behind the choir ever since. Now Taćciana Łapacina is 80 years old and has the title of 'Distinguished artist of the Byelorussian Soviet Republic'.

B A R Y S A Ū

The new cinema *Jubilejny* opened its doors to spectators. It has 120 seats. The cinema is run by school-children of one of Barysau's secondary schools, who fill all the posts from manager to usherette.

B R E S T

A teachers' conference on the subject 'The role of literature and art in education of the Soviet man' took place in Brest. Speakers were the lecturers of the city's Institute of Education L. Smaljanava, J. Čarniaŭskaja and Ja. Lašuk, who spoke on present-day trends in Byelorussian literature, and in children's literature in particular.

CIMKAVIČY

This native town of the novelist Kuźma Čorny boasts of a flourishing amateur theatre which was founded in 1938. It has also a children's section. The repertoire of the theatre consists mainly of plays by Byelorussian playwrights such as J. Kupała, Ul. Haľubok, Ar. Maŭzon, A. Maka-jonak and others.

HOMIEL

The writer Ivan Siarkoŭ from Homiel was awarded the first prize in the All-Soviet competition for the best children's book for his novel *My chłopczy żyvučyja* (We are tenacious boys). It recounts the adventures of two youngsters from Eastern Byelorussia in the early post-war period. The novel was first printed in the monthly *Maładość* in 1970, and a year later appeared in book form.

HRODNA

An exhibition of paintings of local artists was held in April. Over 70 works by A. Voľkaŭ, L. Nalivajka, V. Haľubina, V. Danienkaŭ and others were shown.

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Three portrait paintings from the early 17th century were found in the basement of the former Brigittine convent in Hrodna. They are now being restored, and will form part of the collection of the Byelorussian State Art Museum in Minsk.

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The artistic life of Hrodna has been enriched by the formation of the city philharmonic orchestra.

KLIMAVIČY

A festival of ethnographical song and art of the Klimavič district, one of the most eastern parts of the Byelorussian SSR, took place in February. One of the most successful entries was that of the 70-year old village violinist Andrej Jankoŭski.

KRAJCY (Viciebsk province).

The small village of Krajcy is a major tourist attraction because of the Zoological Museum of the *Biarezinski* nature reserve. In the first half of 1971 alone the museum had over 10 thousand visitors. The *Biarezinski*

reserve comprises an area of 800 sq. kilometers along the river Biarezina, partly in the Viciebsk and partly in the Minsk provinces, and is particularly rich in all kinds of wild life.

LOZNA (Viciebsk province).

The children of the local secondary school are particularly proud of their countryman, the People's Writer of Byelorussia, Michaś Łyńkoŭ. They correspond with him, and the school library has a special section containing all Łyńkoŭ's works autographed by the author.

ORŠA

The seminar of young Byelorussian writers, artists and scientists was held in the holiday camp *Čajka* near Orša in September. It was the fourth encounter of this kind, the first three being at Sviciaž, Narač and in Novopolack, but it was the first to include the scientists as well as writers and artists.

PADLAŚSIE (Lachavičy district).

The village choir of the village of Padlaśsie is 30 years old. It was founded by Hienadž Citovič who is now director of the Byelorussian State Choir. In 1965 the Padlaśsie choir was given the title of 'People's Choir of the Byelorussian SSR'.

RAKKAŬCY (Smarhoń district).

A schoolboy, A. Šachnovič, while digging potatoes in the field, found a treasure consisting of 223 coins which proved to be 10th century Arab dirhemmas from Samarkand and other places in Central Asia. Byelorussian archaeologists have begun excavation in this locality.

SŁONIM

The woven bedspreads and other objects made by Safija Juryk have become famous far outside Byelorussia, and she receives numerous requests for her products from as far as Voronež, Archangelsk and Stavropol. She has been practising the art of handweaving for over twenty years, and all her products have been executed according to traditional Byelorussian folk design. Now the Słonim factory of art objects has asked Safija Juryk to work for them.

TURAŮ

An amateur gypsy song and dance ensemble was formed in this one of the most ancient Byelorussian cities. The average age of the members of the ensemble is 20.

VIAZYŃKA

Restoration work has begun on the house in which the greatest Byelorussian poet, Janka Kupała, was born in 1882. It is hoped that the house will be restored to its original state as it was when the poet's family lived there.

VICIEBSK

An exhibition entitled 'Old Viciebsk' was held in the city museum in March.

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On 24 March the Jakub Kołas Theatre showed the premiere of Shakespeare's *King Lear*. The director was S. Kazimiroŭski.

ŽODZINA

An art exhibition was held in April in Žodzina, the centre of the Byelorussian car industry. Works of the artists V. Viarsocki, V. Hramyka, M. Savicki, V. Žoŭtak, Ja. Zajcaŭ and others were shown.

III. Events Abroad

CANADA

On 22 March at the Carlton University, Ottawa, Dr. J. Sadoŭski of Queens University, Kingston, gave a lecture entitled 'Byelorussia and Byelorussians: a neglected aspect of Slavic studies'.

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The Byelorussian Institute of Arts and Science organised a study week-end on Byelorussia at Queens University, Kingston on 17-18 April. The following papers were read: Dr. J. Nicholson (McGill University) 'Tradition and innovations in Byelorussian stress system'; B. Šaparev (University of Toronto) 'Prospects of development of nuclear power in Byelorussia'; Dr. O. Arechva (University of Southern Illinois) 'The idea of national independence in the works of Janka Kupała'; A. Malycky (University of Calgary) 'Byelorussian language in the press of Soviet Byelorussia'; Dr. J. Zaprudnik (New York City University) 'Nationality question in the Third Russian Duma 1907-1913'; Kr. V. Kipiel (New York Public Library) 'Byelorussian books in the New York Public Library'; Dr. V. Tumaš (President, Byelorussian Institute of Arts and Sciences) 'Confiscation of Skaryna's books in Wrocław'; A. Adamovič (Columbia University) 'New biographical dictionary of writers of Soviet Byelorussia'.

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ITALY

Monsignor Piotr Tatarynovič, one of the senior Byelorussian Catholic priests, celebrated a double anniversary: his 75th birthday and 50th anniversary of his priestly ordination. Born in 1896 in the village of Miaz'viedzičy, Mgr. Tatarynovič was educated in Stuck, St. Petersburg and Minsk and was ordained priest in 1921. Before the war he worked as a parish priest in Western Byelorussia. He was also known as an author of several articles which were published in Byelorussian Catholic periodicals in Vilna. Some of his works appeared also in book form. After the last war Mgr. Tatarynovič settled permanently in Rome where he became director of the Byelorussian section of Vatican Radio since its inception in 1949. He retired from the Radio on 15 January 1971, and his place was taken by the Rt. Rev. Archimandrite Leo Haroška. Since 1950 Mgr. Tatarynovič has published the religious journal *Znič*. He has also made new translations of the New Testament and of the Mass into Byelorussian.

POLAND

The Byelorussian Association in Poland celebrated its 15th anniversary. It was also 15 years since the beginning of the publication of the Association's weekly paper *Niva*. The Association has now 161 local clubs, a well-known folk and dance ensemble *Lavonicha*, and a Byelorussian ethnographical museum in Biełavieža, which was founded in 1966. It was also thanks chiefly to the Association's efforts that there are 163 secondary schools and 3 'sixth-form colleges' in which Byelorussian is either the language of instruction or is taught as a subject.

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Every year 20 teachers of Byelorussian in Poland go to Minsk on a refresher course. A special committee in Biełastok prepares the syllabus.

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The Byelorussian writer Anton Vasileŭski, better known as *Dziadźka z Lepiela*, is 80 years old. His first short stories began to appear in the 1920s in Byelorussian periodical publications in Vilna. Since the last war Vasileŭski has lived permanently in Poland.

RUSSIA

The new comedy by the Byelorussian playwright M. Matukoŭski, *Amnistyja*, was staged by the Moscow Central Theatre of the Soviet Army.

UNITED KINGDOM

The Francis Skaryna Byelorussian Library and Museum in London was officially opened on 15 May by Prof. Robert Auty, professor of Comparative Slavonic Philology at Oxford. It was blessed by the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Domenico Enrici. The library, which started 20 years ago as a private collection, contains over 10,000 titles of books, some of them very rare, in all fields of Byelorussian studies. It has also a rich collection of periodical publications, manuscripts and archive material.

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On 17 July, the Association of Byelorussians in Great Britain held in London its 25th Annual General Meeting. Founded in 1946, the Association is one of the oldest Byelorussian organizations abroad. Apart

from London, it has flourishing large branches and owns property in Bradford and Manchester, and has smaller local groups in other towns.

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The Association of Byelorussians in Great Britain operated its own postal service during the postal strike in February and March, 1971. The service obtained the license from the Postmaster General on 17 February, which lasted until 10 March. Apart from local deliveries in London, letters were posted to Oxford, Reading, Birmingham, Manchester, Bradford and even abroad. Two sets of stamps were issued, the second set consisting of five stamps representing various Byelorussian historical buildings.

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In London the Anglo-Byelorussian Society organised its 6th course of lectures on Byelorussian Culture. The lectures were held at the Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House. The following papers were read: Rt. Rev. C. Sipovič, 'Archimandrite Andrej Cikota (1891-1952) and his place in the Byelorussian Catholic Revival'; Dr. A. B. McMillin, 'Alhierd Abuchovič (1840-1898) and his times'; J. Dingley, 'The *Grammatika slovenskaja* of Jan Uževič (1643, 45)'; Dr. R. A. French, 'Present population trends in Byelorussia'; and A. Nadson, 'The monastery of Laŭryšava and its Gospels (early 14th century)' and 'Skaryna's prayer book'.

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A study weekend on the early printed books in Eastern Europe was held at Dorking on 3-5 December. It was organised by the School of Slavonic and East European Studies of London University. The following papers were read: P. Valois, 'Books printed before 1800 in the School of Slavonic and East European Studies Library', Prof. R. Auty, 'Glagolitic incunabula'; D. Deletant, 'Early Romanian printed books'; Dr. V. Pinto, 'Early Bulgarian printed books'; R. Clogg, 'Greek printing in the Ottoman Empire and the Diaspora 1721-1800'; E. P. Tyrrell, 'Old Slavonic and Russian books in Cambridge up to 1800'; A. Nadson, 'New information on Skaryna's printing in Vilna'; Dr. G. F. Cushing, 'The Hess mystery';

Dr. M. Danilewicz, 'Some remarks on the history of Polish printing from its origins to the 18th century'.

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Daminik Anińska, the oldest member of the Byelorussian community in London, died on 28 December at the age of 84. He was born in the Sakołka district in western Byelorussia (now in the Polish Republic). From 1910 his correspondence and articles began to appear in Byelorussian papers, *Naša niva*, and later in *Bielaruś*. After the First World War he wrote for the papers *Bielaruskaja krynica* and *Chryścijanskaja dumka*, and published a few books. After the last war he settled permanently in London.

UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA

On 30 October at the Byelorussian

Cultural Centre in New York, Dr. V. Tumaš read a paper entitled 'Byelorussians and the Byelorussian SSR in the light of the Soviet census of 1970'.

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On 30 October at the Byelorussian Institute of Arts and Sciences in New York held a meeting in honour of the poetess Natalla Arsieŭnieva to mark fifty years since the appearance in print of her first poem. The poetess, who now lives permanently in New York, was a pupil of the Byelorussian secondary school in Vilna. She is the author of two collections of poems *Pad sinim niebam* (1927) and *Siahoŭnia* (1944) as well as several poems scattered in various Byelorussian periodical publications which appeared in Byelorussia and abroad.
