

## Byelorussian Chronicle 1972

### EVENTS IN BYELORUSSIA

The year 1972 in Byelorussia was marked by celebrations in honour of the great Byelorussian poets Janka Kupała (1882-1942) and Jakub Kołas (1882-1956) on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of their births.

The greatest celebrations in honour of Janka Kupała were held in Minsk on 5-7 July and included a special exhibition, a study session of the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences and the unveiling of a monument to the poet in the park that bears his name. This was followed by a festival of poetry in Kupała's birthplace, Viazynka, in which several outstanding poets from all the Soviet republics took part. A similar festival was held on 17 September in Jakub Kołas's native village, Mikałajeuščyna, with the participation of guests from all over the Soviet Union who came to Byelorussia for the 'Festival of literatures of the peoples of the USSR' (12-18 September). The main celebrations in honour of Jakub Kołas took place in Minsk on 1-3 November, culminating in the unveiling of a monument to the poet in the Jakub Kołas Square. Lesser celebrations took place in other Byelorussian cities. During the year there appeared in Byelorussian newspapers and magazines several articles and studies about Kupała and Kołas, as well as many books, including the first volumes of new editions of their complete works.

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The Janka Kupała poetry prize for 1972 was awarded to the poet Kastuś Kirejenka for his book of poems *Knihasta piesień*. The Jakub Kołas prose prize was given to Ivan Navumienka for his masterly studies *Janka Kupała, duchoŭny voblik hieroja* and *Jakub Kołas, duchoŭny voblik hieroja*. Vasil Vitka received the state prize for children's literature for his poem *Bielaruskaja kałychanka* and other works. The art prize went to the artist Arlen Kaškurevič for his series of illustrations of works of Janka Kupała, and another series entitled *Partyzany*. The music prize was

awarded to the composer Jury Siemianiaka.

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The People's poet of Byelorussia Piatruś Broŭka was awarded the title of 'Hero of Socialist Labour' and the Order of Lenin.

At present Broŭka is the chief editor of the Byelorussian Soviet Encyclopedia.

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The writers Ivan Mielež and Ivan Šamiakin were awarded the title of 'People's writer of Byelorussia'.

Ivan Mielež also won the Soviet Lenin prize in literature for 1972 for his novels *Ludzi na bałocie* and *Podych navalnicy*.

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Among the recently elected corresponding members of the Academy of Sciences of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic there are Vasil Bandarčyk, Mikałaj Biryła, Ivan Navumienka and Uładzimir Niafiod. Vasil Bandarčyk is the director of the Institute of Ethnography and Folklore of the Academy of Sciences of the BSSR. Among his numerous publications the three books on the history of Byelorussian ethnography (published between 1964 and 1972) are of particular interest. The philologist Mikałaj Biryła is best known for his two-volume work entitled *Bielaruskaja antrapanimija* (Minsk 1966-1969). Ivan Navumienka is a professor of literature at the Byelorussian State University in Minsk. He is a well-known writer in his own right and the author of studies on Janka Kupała and Jakub Kołas, for which he was awarded the Jakub Kołas prize. Uładzimir Niafiod, who works at the Institute of Ethnography, is well known as the author of three books on the history of the Byelorussian theatre (published between 1959 and 1961). At the present moment he is the chief editor of a seven-volume work entitled *Monuments of Byelorussian History and Culture* which is now in the course of preparation.

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A Consulate-General of the Polish Republic was opened in Minsk in April. This is the second consulate in the Byelorussian capital, the first being that of the German Democratic Republic.

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The Byelorussian literary journal *Poŭmnia* is 50 years old. It was founded in 1922. After the closure of the journals *Matadniak* and *Uzvyšša* in 1932, *Poŭmnia* remained for some considerable time the only extant Byelorussian literary publication, as well as being the organ of the Union of Byelorussian Soviet Writers. In this capacity it has played an important role in the development of Byelorussian literature. Apart from new works by Byelorussian writers, several important articles have appeared in it, dealing with literary criticism, the history of literature, as well as the history of Byelorussia and the development of the Byelorussian literary language. Today there are other Byelorussian journals of a similar character, but *Poŭmnia* still remains the most distinguished of them all.

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The Byelorussian Lenin State Library in Minsk celebrated its 50th anniversary. It is the largest Byelorussian library in Byelorussia, and its Byelorussian section alone contains over 200,000 titles. There are also several early printed books, including certain Skaryna editions, and rare Byelorussian publications of the 19th century, such as Kalinoŭski's *Mužykaja praŭda*. The Library is also the centre of Byelorussian bibliographical research.

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Prof. Janina Hurynovič from the University of Toruń in Poland, who died recently, bequeathed to the Byelorussian Central Archives of Literature and Arts in Minsk important papers and documents belonging to her uncle, the Byelorussian poet and folklorist Adam Hurynovič (1869-1894).

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The granddaughter of the greatest Byelorussian 19th-century poet Francišak Bahuševič (1840-1900), Stanisława Tomaszewska, who lives now in Poland, visited Byelorussia and helped to recover certain papers and

documents belonging to her grandfather, which had been hidden during the last war to save them from destruction. All the documents were deposited in the Janka Kupała Institute of Literature in Minsk.

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The millionth inhabitant of Minsk was born on 26 January. His name is Aleh Baško and his parents work in a clothing factory.

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On 21 January a memorial plaque was unveiled in Radaškavičy on the house in which Branisłaŭ Taraškievič lived from 1923 to 1932. An outstanding scholar and the author of the first grammar of modern Byelorussian, Taraškievič was also leader of the Byelorussian Socialist *Hramada* (party) in the 1920s in Polish-occupied Western Byelorussia.

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The earliest Byelorussian printed book after Skaryna was the Calvinist Catechism by Symon Budny, printed in Niasviž in 1562. To commemorate this event a memorial plaque was affixed on 5 May to the house in which the ancient printing press was situated. The house is now occupied by the editorial offices of the local newspaper *Čyrvony ściah*.

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Days of Bulgarian literature were held in Byelorussia in May. A group of Bulgarian writers, headed by Dimităr Angelov, visited Minsk, Brest, Mahiloŭ, Homiel and other cities.

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An exhibition of Czech books was held in Minsk in May. A similar exhibition of books from East Germany was organised in October.

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An international consultation on the Slavonic linguistic atlas took place from 22 May to 16 June at the Jakub Kołas Institute of Linguistics in Minsk.

On 7-9 June an All-Soviet conference on experimental linguistics was held at the Minsk Institute of Foreign Languages.

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On 25-29 September Hrodna was the seat of the 14th international symposium on the agrarian history of Eastern Europe.

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The All-Soviet conference of agricultural colleges was held in June at the Byelorussian Academy of Agriculture in Horki. The Horki Academy was founded in 1836 and is the oldest higher agricultural educational and research establishment in the USSR.

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The 5th biennial convention of young Byelorussian writers, artists and scientists took place in Svietlahorsk on 5-16 September. Over 160 people took part. Svietlahorsk is one of Byelorussia's new towns which have sprung up since the last war. Its electrical power station is one of the largest in the country and supplies electricity to the whole of south-eastern Byelorussia. It is also a centre of the rapidly growing chemical industry.

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The studio *Bielarušfilm* produced a new documentary film about the poet Maksim Bahdanovič (1891-1917). The scriptwriter is the poet Aleš Bačyla, the author of the book about Bahdanovič entitled *Sladami Maksima* (Minsk, 1971), and of the libretto for the opera *Zorka Vieniera*.

Another recent film from the same studio is *Mahila Iva*, based on the legend about the origins of the city of Mahiloŭ.

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The Mahiloŭ theatre staged the première of the play *Sotnikaŭ*, based on the novel of the same name by Vasil Bykaŭ.

Bykaŭ is one of the best known

modern Byelorussian writers. His works have been translated into 21 languages, including English. They have been also adapted for stage, cinema, television and ballet.

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The Viciebsk Jakub Kołas Theatre staged the première of the play *Šniežnyja zimy*, based on the latest novel of the same title by Ivan Šamiakin. The adaptation was made by the author himself in collaboration with Uł. Hančaroŭ.

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Alaksandr Miazdźviedź, who won gold medals for wrestling at the Olympic Games in Tokio, Mexico and Munich, was made a freeman of the city of Minsk on 15 September.

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A grand concert of amateur artists from all over Byelorussia took place in Minsk on 26 December. Over 1,500 artists took part.

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The village library of Ržeŭ in Eastern Byelorussia has a collection of 1,500 books with the autographs of their authors.

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The Byelorussian State Library in Minsk held an exhibition entitled 'Byelorussian early printed books' in January.

The Jakub Kołas Library of the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences also held an exhibition entitled 'Scientific books of the 15-18th centuries'.

## EVENTS ABROAD

The 90th anniversary of the birth of Janka Kupała and Jakub Kołas was observed in many places outside Byelorussia. Special commemorative celebrations were held in various cities of the Soviet Union, including Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev. In Warsaw the Slavonic section of the Polish Academy of Sciences held a commemorative session in honour of Kupała on 18 May. Celebrations of a more popular character, organised by the Byelorussian Association in Poland, took place in Biełastok, Bielsk Podlaski and other places. An evening in honour of the two poets, with the participation of artists from Byelo-

ruссия, was held in Paris on 23 November under the auspices of UNESCO. In London the Association of Byelorussians in Great Britain organized on 2 December an evening of poetry of Kupała and Kołas in English translation by Vera Rich. The Francis Skaryna Library held an exhibition of the published works by and about the two poets. Other celebrations were held in Australia, U.S.A. and Canada.

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A Byelorussian exhibition was held in Vilna in the Historical Museum of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences.

All exhibits originally formed part of the Byelorussian Museum in Vilna, which was founded in 1921 mainly from the collections of Ivan Łuckievič (d. 1919), and maintained by the private efforts of Byelorussians in Polish-occupied Western Byelorussia. In 1945 the Museum was closed by the Soviet authorities, and its collections handed over to the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, where they are kept in storage rooms.

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The second conference on Byelorussian-Ukrainian literary contacts was held at L'vov University. The Byelorussian delegation was headed by Prof. P. Archrymienka from the University of Homiel. The first conference was held in Homiel in 1969.

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On 16 April in London the Association of Byelorussians in Great Britain celebrated its 25th anniversary. Among those present were several guests from other countries, including the Association's founder and first President, Dr. V. Žuk-Hryškievič who now lives in Canada.

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An exhibition entitled *Byelorussian Heritage in London* was held during the month of October at the Church Farm House Museum in Hendon (north London). It was organised by the London Borough of Barnet Library Services with material from the collections of the Francis Skaryna Byelorussian Library and Museum. The exhibition enjoyed considerable popularity among the public and reports concerning it appeared in the local press and radio programme.

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At the seventh course of lectures on Byelorussian culture, organised in London by the Anglo-Byelorussian Society during the academic year 1972-73, the following papers were read: 'Traditional dietetics and culinary usages in rural Byelorussia' (G. Picarda); 'Byelorussian Primers of the 16th and 17th centuries' (A. Nadson); 'Germanisms in some Byelorussian legal documents of the 16th and 17th centuries' (R. Patry-Tamušanski); 'Coinage and Mints of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania' (J. Dingley); 'Aspects of Byelorussian verse and versification' (A. B. McMillin); and

'Byelorussian and Ukrainian linguistics relations' (B. Struminski).

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The Francis Skaryna Byelorussian Library and Museum in London acquired a copy of *Novyj Zavet*, printed in the Kuteina monastery (near Orša in eastern Byelorussia) in 1652. The main text is in Church Slavonic, but the dedication to Bishop Joseph Harbacki, the introduction and commentaries to the text are in Byelorussian.

Another valuable recent acquisition is a manuscript copy of the Pontifical Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom in Church Slavonic with parallel translation into Latin. Written in the 17th-century Byelorussian cursive hand (*skoropis*), it was presented by Theodore Skuminovič, Catholic Suffragan Bishop of Byelorussia (d. 1668) to the Church of SS. Sergius and Bacchus in Rome, which belonged then to the Byelorussian Basilian Fathers.

Other accessions include *Slovar' belorusskogo narecija* by I. Nosovič (SPB., 1870), *Obozrenije istorii Belorussii* by O. Turčiniovič (SPB., 1857), *Belorusskije pesni* by P. Sejn (SPB., 1874), *Statut Kazimierza Jagiellonczyka*, edited by I. Daniłowicz (Vilna, 1826), as well as several rare Byelorussian editions from before 1939, including a number of dictionaries published in the 1920s in Minsk by the Byelorussian Terminological Commission. Two English language publications are worthy of mention. They are the two volumes of *Travels of Macarius* (London, 1836), and *Biblical Researches and Travels in Russia* by E. Henderson (London, 1826) with an interesting chapter on Skaryna and his biblical translations.

The Library receives regularly 40 periodicals in the Byelorussian language alone, in addition to several publications in other languages.

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The Byelorussian Institute of Arts and Sciences in New York celebrated its 20th anniversary by holding a study seminar on 26 February. The President of the Institute, Dr. V. Tumaš, read a paper on the conflict which arose in 1646 between Moscow and Poland concerning the language of diplomatic correspondence. The Poles wanted to write their letters in

Polish, while the Muscovites insisted that they should be written in Byelorussian which was then the official language of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Other papers were presented by A. Adamovič, Dr. S. Stankievič and Dr. V. Kipiel.

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The 10th biennial convention of Byelorussians from the U.S.A. and Canada was held on 2-4 September in Toronto. The rich and varied programme also included lectures by Dr. V. Tumaš entitled '450 years of Byelorussian printing', and by A. Adamovič on Janka Kupała and Jakub Kołas.

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A new English-language publication, *Facts on Byelorussia*, appeared in New York in May. The editor is Dr. J. Zaprudnik, Assistant Professor of history at Queens College of the New York City University. The aim of the bulletin is to give information about current events in Byelorussia on the basis of reports in the Byelorussian Soviet press. The bulletin appears six times a year.

The publication of *Byelorussian Youth* was resumed in New York after a six years' interval. It is a bilingual quarterly journal, with the majority of articles written in English.

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Jazep Hładki, a well-known Byelo-

ussian educationalist and ethnographer, died in New York on 28 July at the age of 82. Born in Łahojsk district in Central Byelorussia, he settled permanently in the U.S.A. after the last war. There, under the pseudonym of Adam Varłyha, he published several valuable works, such as *Krajovy slovník Łahojščyny* (1970), *Prykazki Łahojščyny* (1966-1972), *Čatyry ũračystaści* (1970) and many others.

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The Soviet team at the Olympic Games in Munich in September included 21 Byelorussian athletes who between them won 11 gold, 6 silver and 3 bronze medals. The 36-year-old lecturer from Minsk Alaksandr Miadźviedź won his third gold medal for wrestling after Tokio and Mexico. The greatest personal success was achieved by the young gymnast Volha (Olga) Korbust from Hrodna.

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An exhibition of Byelorussian books was held in Bielastok (Polish Republic) in April.

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The Byelorussian folksong and dance ensemble *Ranica* from Hrodna toured the Bielastok province in July.

The Byelorussian State Dance ensemble visited Poland in December and made appearances in Warsaw, Gdańsk, Katowice and other cities, receiving very favourable reviews from the press.

