The Alphabet and Orthography of Byelorussian in the 20th Century

BY

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I

At the beginning of the 20th century the Byelorussian language had no officially established alphabetical or orthographical norms. Although many of the characteristic features of Byelorussian pronunciation (e.g. akańnie and jakańnie, dziekańnie and ciekańnie, the hardening of r, ż, ć and ś) were reflected sporadically in texts as early as the 14th and 15th centuries and more frequently — but still with a considerable degree of inconsistency — in the 16th and 17th centuries, the further development and stabilisation of these features was effectively hindered by subsequent historical circumstances, in particular by the suppression of Byelorussia's national identity, one aspect of which was the treatment of the Byelorussian language until the end of the 19th century as a dialect of Great Russian (malorusskoje narečje).

The writers of works which appeared in the second half of the 19th century and the first few years of the 20th century had no specifically Byelorussian orthographical traditions on which to draw. Accordingly, their works, published in either Latin or Cyrillic script, were characterised by a variety of graphical symbols, largely based on the Polish or Russian alphabets, and by somewhat arbitrary orthographical systems. For example, the sound [w], in addition to being represented by the symbol ý as it is in modern Byelorussian, was also written as y (постанови́й) or в (правду́) and in Latin script as u (zausiody); iо occurred not only in Latin script but also in Cyrillic where modern Byelorussian has ĺ (завоюваčь, вясіола); i was used in Cyrillic texts only in accordance with the pre-1917 Russian convention i.e. before a vowel — elsewhere и was used (дзикie, на съвеци, тольки́); the softness of c, z before another soft consonant was generally reflected in the spelling (часьци, зьверх), but lengthened consonants were not normally spelt double (жьцье). Akańnie and jakańnie were reflected with varying degrees of consistency, the latter rather more regularly than the former (цира́ть, радасы́ць, даброму́, ска́нчения, хо́лас cf. одного́, перэ́д, пра́даваць, цзереда, хо́лас; бяда, вясі́ола, пiarвие, siale cf. перэ́сельцца́).

Clearly there was a need for standardisation of both alphabet and orthography, and this need became even more apparent in the first decade of the 20th century when at a time of growing national consciousness Byelorussian publishing houses were established in Minsk, Vilna, Kiev and St. Petersburg. The first of these, Zahlanie sonca i ľ naša vakonca, began operating in St. Petersburg towards the end of 1906; almost simultaneously the first legal Byelorussian
newspaper, Naša dola, was published in Vilna. Naša dola was to have a short life: the tsarist authorities confiscated the first five issues and the sixth closed it down. In November it was succeeded by Naša niva among the regular contributors to which were the authors Kapała, Kolas, Ciotka, Hartny, Biadula and Bahdanovič. Since there were at this period no officially codified norms, these publications had a significant role to play in the establishment of the alphabetical, orthographical and grammatical norms of the Byelorussian literary language. Their normative influence was particularly marked where the alphabet was concerned.

From the very beginning Naša dola, Naša niva and the publications of Zahlanie sonca i ū naša vakonca were printed in both Latin and Cyrillic script. The lacinka was based on the Polish alphabet, with the addition of ū for Byelorussian [w]; the Cyrillic script or hraždanca on the Russian alphabet, with the addition of ų for [w], the substitution of e for ę, uič for u, and the elision of ę after a hard consonant in word final position (this last anticipating a change which was introduced into the Russian alphabet only after 1917).

In the lacinka the Czech symbols č and š began to appear sporadically in place of the Polish digraphs cz and sz. By 1909 they were to be encountered frequently in Naša niva and from 1910 onwards became the standard forms; they were also introduced into the publications of Zahlanie sonca i ū naša vakonca. On the other hand the newspaper Bielarus continued to use the traditional Polish lacinka without these modifications.

In the hraždanca jotated [o] and [o] after a soft consonant were usually represented, as in modern Byelorussian, by ė (and only occasionally by ďo), although the earliest publications of Zahlanie sonca i ū naša vakonca have ūo; in Ciotka’s Pierśaże čytańnie (1906) the fricative [ʒ] and the plosive [ɡ] were differentiated by the symbols r and ř. Later, however, these features were not retained: ė became the standard form, while ř was used to represent both fricative and plosive. Russian u was replaced by i from 1909 onwards and by 1914 the apostrophe had ousted ū in its role of separating a jotated vowel from a preceding hard consonant (e.g. пад'ехаў became пад'ехаў). The Byelorussian Cyrillic alphabet was thus established in the form in which, despite a number of proposals for reform in the 1920s — most notably a desire to create special symbols for the combinations ʒɛ and ʒɛk — it is still used today.

One problem associated with the alphabet which remained unresolved, however, was the question of whether Byelorussian should continue to use both Latin and Cyrillic script. As was noted above, the earliest publications of many of the publishing houses set up at the beginning of the 20th century and especially Naša niva and its associated publications (calendars, various supplements) were produced simultaneously in both. This was inevitably an expensive and time-consuming operation, so much so that in its issue no. 50 for 1911 the editors of Naša niva posed the question as to which of the two scripts should be adopted to the exclusion of the other (Jaki šryft vybrać dla bielaruskich drukau?). This was the signal for a lively
debate: answers flooded in to the editorial board not only from all corners of Byelorussia itself, but also from the Ukraine, Russia and even from distant Siberia where, as Naša niva somewhat coyly expressed it 'there are many of our brothers' (‘jość śmat našych bra-toľ’). Some of this correspondence was reproduced in issues 4, 5, 6 and 8 for 1912 in a column entitled Conversations with our readers (Hutarky z čytačami).

While a few correspondents favoured the retention of both scripts (one argument advanced in support of this was that the adoption of a single script would drive a wedge into national unity by divorcing Orthodox from Catholic and by creating a cultural division between East and West8), the majority agreed with Naša niva — there should be a single Byelorussian alphabet7. What remained in dispute was which alphabet should be chosen. Among the arguments put forward in favour of the hraždanka were that it was the alphabet in which the Lithuanian Statute, the first Byelorussian secular book, appeared8; that the majority of Catholics were familiar with it from school, whereas the reverse was not true9; and that the Orthodox population of Byelorussia was three times as large as the Catholic population10. The lacinka was preferred by others on the grounds that the Latin alphabet was widespread among 'cultured' nations and was being adopted by many nations which had formerly used their own script; and that in any case it conveyed the characteristics of Byelorussian ‘better and more clearly’ than Cyrillic11. A small minority favoured the creation of an entirely new alphabet which would 'satisfy all the requirements of the Byelorussian language'12 (though these were not defined).

After the publication of this correspondence there was a three-month hiatus before Naša niva returned to the subject, once again under the heading Hutarky z čytacami13. Although in the meantime the published correspondence had started a fresh avalanche of letters, none of these were published since they added nothing new to the discussion but simply reiterated previous arguments. It was now time to reach a decision. The creation of an entirely new alphabet was rejected on the grounds that in current circumstances it would be impossible to teach such an alphabet to Byelorussians and that its introduction would retard Byelorussia's renaissance (adradžeňnie) by some decades. The main arguments in favour of the lacinka and hraždanka were summarised and the editors made two further points: far more readers were in favour of the hraždanka than the lacinka, and twice as many copies of Naša niva were sold in Cyrillic script as in Latin.

To Naša niva all the signs pointed in one direction: in future the newspaper should be printed only in Cyrillic or 'Russian letters' as Naša niva termed them. This decision was not, however, implemented immediately. Naša niva continued to appear in both Latin and Cyrillic script until issue no. 42 for 1912 when, in a leading article surveying the six years of the newspaper's existence, the editors announced that henceforth Naša niva would appear only in 'Russian
This was presented as the lesser of two evils — the alternative was to cease publication altogether.14

*Naša niva's* choice of the Cyrillic alphabet was eventually mirrored in Byelorussian as a whole, but not until some time after the 1917 *revolution* was it generally adopted, at least in Eastern Byelorussia. Significantly, at the 1926 conference on the reform of the alphabet and orthography even the most vociferous critics of the existing *hrażdanka* (e.g. Ja. Losik) rejected any suggestion of a return to the *lacinka*. In Western Byelorussia, however, the *lacinka* continued to be used alongside the *hrażdanka* right up to the Second World War.

II

If the standardisation of the Byelorussian alphabet was a relatively swift and painless affair, the same could not be said of the establishment of the normative norms of modern literary Byelorussian. Orthographical rules have been a contentious issue from the publication of *Taraskievič's Bietaruskaia hramatyka dia skol* in 1918, through the reforms of 1933 and 1957 and, for some at least, remain so to the present day.15

The normative influence of *Naša niva*, which played such an important part in the establishment of the modern Byelorussian alphabet and in the ultimate adoption of the *hrażdanka* in preference to the *lacinka*, was less evident where the orthographical system was concerned. The lack of an officially codified system of norms, the fact that it was not yet clear which dialect was to form the basis of the emergent literary language, the varied linguistic background of the contributors — all these factors combined to create a situation of some flexibility. Nevertheless it is possible to see certain general tendencies at work: the orthography of vowels was based largely on phonetic principles while that of consonants was based on morphological (or etymological) principles, as was the spelling of loan-words.

In the vowel system strong non-dissimilative *akańnie* was the norm, but there were some restrictions on this, especially in a final open syllable (e.g. *мать* право — *мать* право, *зярэло*, ад *добра* го коня), and with rare exception *а* was preserved in unstressed position (e.g. *можэ*, *морэ*, *хочэцца*). *Jakańnie* was regularly reflected in the immediate pre-tonic syllable only if the vowel under stress was *а* (e.g. *бя* глябы, *весялей*, *вядомы*, *бярэ*, *зямлі*); if the stressed syllable contained the vowel *а*, unstressed *е* in the pre-tonic syllable remained (e.g. *ваеваць*, *земля*, *непраўда*), as it did in all other syllables, both pre- and post-tonic (e.g. *без* народу, *вечер*, *поле*, *сэнне*). Loan-words, proper names and toponyms were usually exempt from these 'norms' (e.g. *зоология*, *тэлефон*, *Достоевскі*, *Орска*).

The main characteristics of consonant orthography at this period were: hard *п* (e.g. *курцца*, на *рэку*); the change of *л*, *в* after a vowel to *у* (e.g. *воўк*, *малакроўе*, са *уці* дапаўненнямі) though with some fluctuation, particularly in foreign names (e.g. *Владыслаў* — *Уладзі-
the doubling tendency to replace the original double consonants of loanwords by single consonants (e.g. праса, тэлерама but cf. масса, прэсса, сумма); dziekaинie and ciekaинie in native words but no softening of д, т in loan-words (e.g. дзержаць, мецьць, cf. акадэмя, тэатр); the preservation of the hardness of many other consonants in loanwords (e.g. газэта, сыстэма, мэбля, маніфэст) and of the softness of л (e.g. філэзаф, парлямэнт). Assimilatory softening was not reflected in the spelling in the early years (1906-7) of Naša niva (e.g. жаданне, жыцьцё) but in later issues was indicated by the use of ъ in the Cyrillic and of the acute accent in the Latin script e.g. жыцьцё, letаиние); assimilation of voiced and unvoiced consonants was not generally reflected, although there was some inconsistency where prefixes ending in д were concerned (cf. адказ — атказы); the orthographical representation of other consonant assimilation showed no discernible pattern. Thus changes in the groups ццв > ццв, шццв > ств, тцк > цк and зск > ск were reflected in the spelling (e.g. выдавецьва, таварыство, брацкі, чалавецкі, рэйкавецкі, францускі) but those in the groups дцтв > цтв, жств > ств, дзк > цк were not (e.g. сынадзва, множгства, людзкі).

None of this, was systematised and the same word or group of sounds frequently showed inconsistencies of spelling, sometimes in one and the same article (cf. жыць — жыць, ёсць — ёсць, яго — шчя etc.)16 For this reason it would be difficult to exaggerate the importance for the development of the modern Byelorussian literary language of the publication in 1918 of Taraskievic’s Bielaruskaja hramatyka dla skol. This is equally true of the morphology and of the orthography of Byelorussian, although it is the latter with which we are concerned here.

Bielaruskaja hramatyka dla skol was not the first published attempt at codifying the orthographical norms of Byelorussian; in 1917 the Losik brothers had published, in Latin script, their pamphlet Jak pravilna pisać pa-bielarusku, which they followed in 1918 with Bielarski pravapis, also in Latin script and clearly based on their previous work. 1918 also saw the publication of two other works which were at least partially concerned with orthographical questions: Prosty sposob stacca а karotkim часе hramatnym which strongly, if not always consistently, advocated the phonetic principle of ‘write as you speak’17, and B. Pačobka’s idiosyncratic and unscientific Hramatyka bielaruskaj mowy.

Taraškievič’s grammar stands out because when it appeared (also, initially, in Latin script but this was soon followed by a Cyrillic version) and without any official imprimatur, it was widely adopted for use in schools, thereby exerting a strong normative influence. Between 1918 and 1921 it went through four editions18. More importantly, at this embryonic stage of the modern Byelorussian literary language Bielaruskaja hramatyka dla skol laid the foundations for its future development, foundations which remain substantially unaltered to the present day. In the words of the authors of Historija
Until recent times, the production of the normative grammar of the Byelorussian literary language was
was

In the introduction to the first edition of his grammar Tarasiievič
recognized the need for a period of flexibility in the form of the written language in order to ensure that the most suitable dialect
should be chosen for the literary language. He felt, however,
that the time had now come to make a choice and Bielaruskaja hramo-
ytyka dla skol was therefore based on what he regarded as the most
characteristic dialect of Byelorussian, namely that with hard p and
strong akaţinie (although he imposed certain restrictions on the latter
in view of the 'long practice of the written language').

Continuing, but at the same time systematising, an earlier tradition, Tarasiievič based his orthographical rules partly on phonetic and
partly on morphological principles. Thus pronunciation norms pro-
cided the justification for the use of only the non-jotated vowels
ь, у, э, ѣ after the hard consonants ж, ч, ш, р, for writing double
sonants in intervocalic position in place of original л, н, з, с, дз, ц, ж, ч and ш followed by [j], for the spellings ры, ли, ли in unstressed
position where Common Slavonic had had sonant + jer (e.g. дры-
жать, блиха, блишать), for prothetic в, г, for the change of в to ѣ
after a vowel and before a consonant, and for the representation of
the softness of з, с, дз, and ц before soft dental and labial consonants
e.g. звяниц, съязза, дзьве, цьвицьец).

With unstressed vowels the picture was somewhat more compli-
cated. It is in this area more than any other that Byelorussian dialects
show a wide variety of pronunciation; any practical system of ortho-
graphy could not hope to reflect all the changes, of both quality and
quantity, which take place at various degrees of removal from the
stressed syllable even within a single dialect. Tarasiievič therefore
compromised between his two basic principles: unstressed о, э were
to be written everywhere as a except in certain loan-words (see
below) and a number of numeral-words (e.g. восемнацьць, шесть-
цать); unstressed е was to be written as я in the immediate pre-tonic
syllable regardless of the vowel under stress, (also with exceptions
for loan-words and certain numerals e.g. семнацьць, дзевятъ),
while in the second pre-tonic syllable jakaiine was to be dissimi-
lar (e.g. лясна, бядуня, ня была, ня дзьцць бут цецяру, не
ячъ, без мяне). In other pre-tonic and in all post-tonic syllables e
was to remain (e.g. верациьо, воцень, полье, дуамем); exceptions to
this rule were made for certain grammaticised endings.

By contrast with vowels the orthography of the consonant system
was based almost entirely on morphological principles. With very few
exceptions consonant assimilation — voicing and devoicing, the
disappearance of consonants in certain consonant groups — was not
reflected in the spelling; the devoicing of consonants was reflected
only in the case of prefixes ending in з (e.g. зглянуць, разбць but
зхадзць, рассьпаць), while the disappearance of consonants in
pronunciation was reflected only in the groups жс, зс, стн and зэн (e.g. боскі, францускі, пачэсны, позны).

Taraškievič separated loan-words into two groups: those which had long since been assimilated into Byelorussian, and those which were current in the literary language but had not yet penetrated the vernacular or had only recently done so. The former were to be written according to the normal orthographical rules of Byelorussian (e.g. літара, аканом, калідор, леварвер); the latter according to their spelling in the language from which they were taken (e.g. тэлерраф, географія, універсэттэ, элемент). This was, of course, a subjective division and not surprisingly became one of the focal points of dissatisfaction with Taraškievič’s orthography in the 1920s.

Two general rules which Taraškievič applied to loan-words of both types were that double consonants in the original language should be replaced by single consonants in Byelorussian (e.g. тэлерама, кака, маса) and that foreign ɬ was to be represented in Byelorussian by soft ɬ (e.g. лямпа, Лёндон, монолёт). Both these features were characteristic of Byelorussian pronunciation.

If we compare Taraškievič’s orthography with that which had gone before, especially in the Naša нiва period, we can see that in addition to regularising certain tendencies already strongly in evidence at that time (the change of ɬ, ɮ after a vowel to ӯ́, the assimilatory softening of consonants, the preservation of soft ɬ in loan-words etc.) Taraškievič introduced rules which extended or in some instances ran counter to current practice. Акаўніе was no longer restricted in a final open syllable and also became the norm for unstressed ə, where previously this had been exceptional; dissimilatory jakaўніе became a feature of the second rather than the immediate pre-tonic syllable; the previously sporadic replacement of double consonants in loan-words by single ones was given the status of a norm.

Notwithstanding the general excellence of Taraškievič’s work and its widespread adoption it was perhaps inevitable that some problems should have been resolved less than satisfactorily. Taraškievič himself acknowledged as much in the introduction to the first edition of Біэларуская храматыка дла скат, but added that he hoped that any changes which were felt to be necessary would not be too great and that ‘all the most important things had been done well’. While the subsequent development of the Byelorussian literary language has shown that all the most important things had indeed been done well, Taraškievič’s orthography had two main defects: in the treatment of unstressed ə, and in the artificial separation of loan-words into those which had penetrated the vernacular and those which were confined to scientific and literary usage, with a consequent difference in the application to those two groups of the rules governing акаўніе (and jakaўніе). It was these two areas which were to attract most of the attention of those who were seeking to reform the orthography of Byelorussian in the 1920s.

The first overt sign of dissatisfaction with Taraškievič’s orthography was the extension of акаўніе to many loan-words which, in Taraškievič’s words, ‘had not yet reached the people’, from 1922...
Towards in the newspaper Savietskaja Bielaruš, although only in the use of unstressed о e.g. хангрэс, шави́нізм быт рэка́нэтам, тэрміна-м. This was also illustrated in the dictionaries compiled by Некра́се́ви́ч, Байкоў and Harecki26. From 1924 a number of articles devoted to this and other orthographical problems began to appear and continued to do so throughout the 1920s27.

The most far-reaching and in many ways the most controversial of these was the Losik brothers' Da reformy bielaruska ha pravapisu. They proposed the following major reforms: the simplification of the rules governing jakánіе by writing а for unstressed е in all syllables; the extension of aка́ніе (in the case of unstressed о) and jakáніе in loan-words, with exceptions only for some compound words; the retention of the soft sign after the consonants з, с, г, г before other к: consonants and also between so-called 'double' consonants; the placement of y, й after a vowel in word initial position or when standing as separate words.

Jazep Losik, in particular, campaigned so effectively for consideration of these reforms that the Scientific Council of the Institute of Byelorussian Culture created a special Orthographical Commission under the chairmanship of A. Čvikevič to examine the Losik brothers' project. The Commission, however, was unable to reach agreement; the Scientific Council therefore decided to call an Academic Conference on the reform of the Byelorussian orthography and alphabet. This conference, which was attended by leading scholars not only from Byelorussia itself, Russia and the Ukraine, but also from Poland (Golombek), Germany (Vasmer) and some other European countries, was held from 14-21 November 1926 and the speeches and reports of the various commissions were published in 192728. Sadly Taraškievič, together with other Western Byelorussian scholars, was prevented from attending because the Polish government would not see them with passports.

Although the conference was concerned with the Byelorussian alphabet and the language of Byelorussian literature as well as orthographical problems, it was the last of these to which it devoted the greatest attention and which generated the most intense discussion. The main speeches on this subject were given by Jazep Losik and S. Niekrasevič, with shorter contributions by, among others, Anton Losik, V. Vožk-Levanovič, P. Rastorgujev and the Ukrainian F. A. Zasik. Some speakers argued for fundamental reforms in Taraškievič's orthography and favoured considerable extension of the phonetic principle, on the Serbian model; others proposed less drastic measures, consisting in the main of a tying up of the loose ends left by Taraškievič. The only point of general agreement was the extension of aка́ніе (in the case of о only) to loan-words.

The main proponent of substantial reform was Jazep Losik. This was not surprising in view of the fact that it was largely as a result of his campaigning that the conference had been called. In his speech he repeated the proposals outlined by himself and his brother Anton in their pamphlet Da reformy bielaruskaha pravapisu (see above). Losik was disturbed by what he felt to be a fear of change and the
uncritical acceptance of Taraškievič's orthography, which was rapidly becoming a sacred cow. He was critical of the etymological principle in orthography on the grounds that it was incomprehensible to the masses and he cited English and French as particularly bad examples. Only the phonetic principle could satisfactorily answer the need for a readily accessible orthography; it should therefore be extended not only to the spelling of unstressed vowels in loan-words, but also to the consonant system of Byelorussian in general. Some degree of phonetic spelling of consonants was already in operation (e.g. брацки, францускi, пачэсны). Why should not such forms as мёт, хлеп, ножка, калодка (for мед, хлеб, ножка, калодка) be equally acceptable? Paradoxically, Losik criticised Taraškievič's rules for jakaźnie precisely on the grounds that vowel changes in unstressed syllables were a matter for phonetic transcription and not for the orthography.

With the exception of the extension of aкаźnie to loan-words Losik's proposals received little support from the other contributors. Rastorgujev gave his qualified approval to the extension of jakaźnie, but warned against going too far — nowhere in Byelorussia did one hear, for instance, пяравярнучь30; Buzuk was in favour of the phonetic representation of consonants — the Serbs had shown that there was nothing to fear in this31; but the retention of i, y after vowels and the abolition of ь after з, с, дз, ц before other soft consonants and between double consonants found almost no support.

Where Losik talked of an 'orthographical crisis'32, the other main speaker at the conference, Niekraševič, counselled caution: there was no crisis. Taraškievič's orthography generally held good, certainly nothing better had as yet emerged. He claimed the support of the absent Western Byelorussian linguists in this and accused the Losik brothers of putting orthographical principles before pronunciation and of adopting an unscientific approach in their pamphlet ('увиеš правапiс, моžна skazacь, budujecca z haläuft')33 which hardly merited the calling of a special conference. Niekraševič was not convinced of the need for reform, except with regard to the extension of aкаźnie to loan-words. Apart from this he suggested only a couple of minor amendments to Taraškievič's orthography: the elimination of jakaźnie from the second pre-tonic syllable and from не and без when written as separate words.

After the speeches and discussions the various proposals were passed to an orthographical commission for further consideration. The commission rejected almost without exception those put forward by Jazep Losik (the extension of the phonetic principle to the spelling of consonants, jakaźnie in all unstressed syllables etc.) but recommended the adoption of Niekraševič's suggestion concerning the elimination of jakaźnie in the second pre-tonic syllable and from не and без when written separately; it also approved the extension of aкаźnie to loan-words as outlined by Niekraševič, i.e. in the case of о only (cf. камiсiя, but дзелегат). The commission's other recommendations were: that i should not be replaced by й when it occurred after a vowel as a separate word or in word initial position, but that y
continue to be replaced by ё in such positions; that the remain-
ning points of reform which had been raised at the conference (e.g. 
the abolition of й after с, т, з, и and between double consonants) should 
be referred to the Orthographical Commission of the Institute of 
Belorussian Culture.

Taraskievich's orthography thus emerged from the conference 
progressively unscathed. The elimination of jakáнне from the second 
pre-tonic syllable regardless of the vowel in the immediate pre-tonic 
asure represented a welcome simplification of Taraskievich's rules 
as did the standardisation of the spellings не and беэ when these 
letters were written separately. The extension of aка́нне (for un-
stressed о) to all loan-words was also welcome since it eradicated the 
need to apply subjective criteria in determining the spelling of such 
words — perhaps the weakest point in Taraskievich's orthography.
The limitation of this change to unstressed о, however, was unfortu-
nate, since it meant that the treatment of unstressed э in loan-
words remained subject to these same subjective criteria and created 
a distinction between, on the one hand, the treatment of unstressed 
э in native words and loan-words assimilated into Byelorussian 
e.g. золата, вада, рака, чарапы, камися, аграном, адука́цья, ака-
эм and, on the other, their treatment in more recent loan-words 
which were regarded as not having penetrated to the vernacular e.g. 
экафія, баганіка but літаратура, рэдакцыя) — a distinction which 
has largely persisted to the present day. 55

One change in Taraskievich's orthography which ran counter to the 
aims of simplification and consistency was the proposal to retain ı in 
non-syllabic position where it occurred as a conjunction or in word 
final position (e.g. баба ı дэе, баба ідзе) — a change which was the 
more surprising in view of the opposition which had been expressed 
by the majority of contributors to the conference when Jazep Losik 
and proposed it. In the first place it represented a departure from 
the general phonetic principle underlying the orthography of vowels 
in Byelorussian; secondly, it introduced an unnecessary complication 
into the rule governing the treatment of this vowel, since it was to 
continue to become ь internally in a word or in word final position 
e.g. своіскі, баджай, людзей); and thirdly, it was inconsistent with 
the treatment of the vowel ь in similar circumstances, since the 
conference rejected a parallel proposal to abolish the change of ь to 
ё. Nevertheless this inconsistency is still in evidence in the ortho-
graphy of Byelorussian today.

III

The conference over, work on the orthography (and, to a lesser 
extent, the alphabet) continued in the Institute of Byelorussian 
Culture. On the 1 October 1927 a Commission on the Literary Lan-
guage was created and was charged with the task of examining all 
the material from the 1926 conference with a view to producing a 
definitive orthography. This commission in turn appointed a special 
Orthographical Commission whose members were: S. Niekrashevich
Between 7 December 1927 and 17 April 1929 it held 33 sessions. Working on the principles that 1) orthographical reform should be separated from the reform of the alphabet and that the orthography should be reformed first on the basis of the existing alphabet; 2) the findings of the 1926 conference were to be regarded as authoritative, but not binding; and 3) taking into account the value of Taraškievič’s orthography, only those changes and additions which would simplify and improve it should be made, the Orthographical Commission produced a plan for the orthography of Byelorussian which was published by the Academy of Sciences in 1930.

Meanwhile a fifth, revised, edition of Taraškievič’s Bielarskaja hramatyka dla skol was published in Vilna in 1929. In his introduction to this edition Taraškievič explained that, while he recognised the need for some reform, he had not introduced any of those changes which had been approved by the 1926 conference because he felt that any reform of the orthography should be carried out as a whole and in conjunction with a reappraisal of the grammar. Piecemeal changes could only lead to ‘harmful chaos’ (‘škodny chaos’). This view was echoed by R. Astroïski in the introduction to the second edition of his Bielarski pravapis, which was based on Taraškievič’s orthography, but in a considerably expanded form.

The 1930 projekt went a long way towards answering Taraškievič’s criticisms. Its proposals for orthographical reform were made in the context of the orthography as a whole (in many respects it endorsed Taraškievič’s orthography) and 13 of the 62 recommendations were concerned as much with grammar as with orthography e.g. there were recommendations on the use of the endings -a and -y in the genitive singular of masculine nouns of the second declension and on the endings to be used in the second person plural of the present/future tense and imperative mood of verbs. As for the orthography itself the projekt covered all the controversial issues of the 1920s. It considered the spelling of loan-words in much greater detail than had Taraškievič, devoting approximately one third of its recommendations to this subject, and also had a special section on the orthography of proper nouns and toponyms, something which Taraškievič had not dealt with at all. An appendix to the consensus recommendations contained the comments of various members of the Orthographical Commission on individual points in the projekt.

In the main the projekt incorporated the recommendations of the 1926 conference. It did not, however, accept the standardisation of the spelling of he and ę or when written separately, and it advocated the retention of syllabic y (as well as i) when it occurred after a vowel as a separate word or in word initial position. Otherwise its only major departures from Taraškievič’s orthography were in recommending the abolition of į after ą, ą, ę, ą before another soft consonant and in double consonants, and of the use of the apostrophe (instead of ū) after soft consonants as well as hard before jotated vowels.
One may question the need for some of these changes and how they accorded with the Orthographical Commission’s brief to ‘take only those changes which would ‘simplify and improve’ the existing orthography — particularly the retention of syllabic y and i and the abolition of б in the circumstances referred to above; what cannot be doubted is that the projekt was the fruit of much thoughtful scholarly consideration of the issues involved. Sadly it was destined to remain merely a projekt; when an official decree detailing reforms was published in Žviazda on 26 August 1933 political considerations had superseded linguistic and practical ones.

By this time many members of the Orthographical Commission which had produced the 1930 projekt were in prison (e.g. Buzuk) or in exile (e.g. Niekrasoŭič) accused of ‘bourgeois nationalism’. The introduction to the 1933 decree leaves us in no doubt as to their fate:

‘Byelorussian national democracy, proceeding from its bourgeois, counter-revolutionary aims, has carried out its subversive saboteurs’ work on both the economic and the cultural front, including the sphere of language, terminology and orthography. National democracy has striven by all means possible to divorce the Byelorussian literary language from the language of the broad working masses, erected an artificial barrier between the Byelorussian and Russian languages and contaminated the Byelorussian language with various medieval archaisms and bourgeois vulgarisms.

The existing Byelorussian orthography has been considerably contaminated by these stated tendencies and is therefore in need of reforms.’

This indictment of the work carried out at the Institute of Byelorussian Culture during the 1920s was expressed in even more propagandistic and vitriolic terms at a general assembly of the writers of Minsk called by the Institute of Linguistics of the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences and the Organisational Committee of the Union of Soviet Writers of the BSSR in December 1933. After a lengthy address by A. Aleksandrovic entitled ‘The class struggle on the linguistic front and the reform of the orthography of the Byelorussian language’ there followed a number of shorter contributions, by, among others, Kolas, Biadula, Krapiva, Lyńkę and Broŭka. These were published in 1934, together with a written submission from Kupala, was convalescing in Kislovodsk, in a volume entitled ‘The Writers of the BSSR about the Reform of the Orthography of the White-Russian Language’ — although a less misleading title might have been ‘The Writers of the BSSR about National Democracy’, since the contributions had rather more to say on that subject than about the reform itself.

The style of the contributions varies little: the ‘national democrats’ are variously aligned with interventionists, the White Guard, Polish fascists, Hitler and German fascists; Niekrasoŭič Jazep Losik, Dabóŭka and others associated with Połymia and Uzvyšśa are singled
out for particular venom. The supremacy of the political aspects of the reforms is perhaps best illustrated by Jakub Košas, who sees three principles at work: the political, the scientific and the practical — in that order⁴⁷.

Predictably, the 1933 decree evoked a hostile response from linguists in non-Soviet Byelorussia and this was exemplified in the publication of a protest against the reform of the orthography by the Byelorussian Scientific Society in Vilna⁴⁸. This document was the outcome of an extraordinary general meeting of the society held on the 31 October 1933 at which a resolution was passed condemning the decree as 'a political act which, trampling on the demands of science, outraging Byelorussian grammar and violating the living Byelorussian language, has as its aim the fusion of the Byelorussian literary language with Russian and the gradual, systematic Muscovisation of the Byelorussian people'⁴⁹, and calling on all participants in the 1926 conference to add their voice to the protest. Although it was also not without political overtones, the protest of the Byelorussian Scientific Society did at least attempt a linguistic analysis of the changes in the orthography brought about by the 1933 decree. In doing so it found that in approximately half the changes there was an element of Russification.

One of the most vociferous opponents of the 1933 decree in Western Byelorussia was Janka Stankievič who in 1936 published, at his own expense, a pamphlet denouncing the reforms and the motives behind them⁵⁰. He was to remain a critic, both theoretical and practical, over the next quarter of a century. In 1947 he published a grammar of Byelorussian⁵¹ which completely ignored the orthographical reforms of 1933 (although it must be said that his own conception of the Byelorussian language was in many respects idiosyncratic), and in 1955 he returned to the subject of his 1935 pamphlet in rather more detail in an article in the émigré publication Bielaruski zbornik⁵².

In the face of all this it is easy to overlook the fact that in a number of its 23 paragraphs the 1933 decree implemented reforms which had been suggested by the 1926 conference and/or the 1930 prajekt. While there can be no question that the decree was largely politically motivated (why else should a special category of ‘international revolutionary words’ be created which were specifically exempted from the rules of akaňnie?), a critical evaluation of the individual points of reform suggests that it was not as completely against the spirit of the Byelorussian language as has been claimed by some of its opponents.

IV

The 1933 decree proposed three changes in the orthography of the Byelorussian vowel system: the limitation of jakaňnie to the immediate pretonic syllable, the standardisation of the spellings he and 6e3 when these were written as separate words, and the use of prothetic b before initial stressed o, y and also before initial un­stressed y where this latter was not a prefix or derived from b. Leaving aside for the moment the last of these changes (which might in
case have been more appropriately included under the section on the orthography of consonants), we find that the other two proposals coincide entirely with those put forward by Niekrasiewicz at the 1926 conference and recommended for adoption by the Orthographical Commission of that conference. (Subsequently in the 1930 projekt the proposal to standardise the spelling of he and bez was rescinded; he and bez were to be regarded as a syllable of the follow-
ne word and be spelt accordingly (i.e. не крячы, без людзей but ня
жау, бяз ня). Both these changes represented a departure from
Taraskievic's orthography. How far were they justified?

By contrast with unstressed o there is a much greater variety in the
—treatment of unstressed e in Byelorussian. Not only are there consider-
able differences from dialect to dialect, between dissimilative and
non-dissimilative jakánie, jakánie and ikánie, but also in
many cases from syllable to syllable. Clearly it was impossible to
 devise an orthographical rule to take account of all these variations.
Nor would it have been appropriate: such a task falls more properly
within the domain of phonetic transcription. Any orthographical rule
was therefore bound to involve some simplification of the pronuncia-
tion norms. With Taraskevič this had taken the form of non-
dissimilative jakánie in the immediate pre-tonic syllable and
dissimilative jakánie in the second\(^53\); the 1933 reform simply went
a stage further by abolishing jakánie altogether in the second pre-
tonic syllable. To argue, as Stankievic does\(^54\), that this goes against
the nature of the Byelorussian vowel system is to misunderstand the
role of the orthography.

Less satisfactory was the standardisation of the spelling of he and
bez when written as separate words. While from a pedagogical point
of view there was a clear advantage in this change, it ignored the
fact that even when they are written separately the particle he and
the preposition bez are purely syntactic words which in pronunciation
are no more independent of the words they qualify than are the
prefixes he- and bez-, which were to continue to alternate with ня-
and бяз- (subject to the new rule of jakánie).

The other rule which the 1933 decree included under the heading
of the orthography of vowels (the use of prothetic в) was an accurate,
if incomplete, reflection of Byelorussian usage (it did not deal with
the occurrence of prothetic в before unstressed a, e.g. у ванні) and was
a rather more precise formulation than Taraskevič's vaguely worded
statement that 'if a word begins with the vowels а, о, у or ə then it
may be preceded by the aspiration в or р\(^55\). It also marked a contrast
with Russian, which has no prothetic consonants. Stankievic never-
theless managed to see an element of Russification in the fact that
this rule had been included among those on vowels rather than
consonants\(^56\).

With one exception the five points in the 1933 decree concerned
with the orthography of consonants implemented reforms proposed in
the 1930 projekt. The exception was the retention of a final stem
consonant д before the c of a following suffix (e.g. гардскі, градскі);
here the 1930 *projekt* had suggested the spelling дз (гарадзкi, грамадзкi).

The two most controversial reforms, however, involved the deletion of ū after з, с, дз, ц before another soft consonant and in double consonants. Opponents of the 1933 decree saw them as prime examples of the Russification of Byelorussian. But how far does this charge stand up in the face of the evidence? There is no doubt that with the deletion of ū after the consonants з, с and, to a lesser extent, ц many words acquired an appearance identical with that of the corresponding Russian word (e.g. свет, след, снег, разведка, цвет), but in the case of дз and double consonants this could not happen because neither the former nor the latter are characteristic of Russian (cf. Byelorussian дзве, задание, солю and Russian две, задание, солью). Moreover, these changes had been proposed long before political considerations had begun to impinge on orthographical matters: Jazep Losik had spoken in favour of them at the 1926 conference and, although some speakers had feared that they would lead to incorrect pronunciation and the decision as to their implementation had been left to the Orthographical Commission set up after the conference, the 1930 *projekt* (which was the result of that commission's work) had recommended their adoption (with Niekras'vič and Kupala dissenting). They were therefore associated as much with the 'academy' as with the Communists.

Surprisingly, at no stage was it proposed to delete ū in double consonants while preserving it after з, с, дз, ц. There would have been a certain logic in such a proposal, since the so-called double consonants are merely an orthographical device to represent lengthened consonants — the deletion of ū should therefore in no way affect their pronunciation.

The third section of the 1933 decree dealt with the orthography of loan-words. This was an area of the orthography which had received insufficient treatment in Taraškievič's grammar and had been the source of much of the dissatisfaction expressed in the 1920s (see above). The 1930 *projekt* had gone some way towards rectifying the situation, devoting approximately a third of its recommendations to this subject, and a number of these were incorporated in the 1933 decree: the extension of *akainie* to loan-words in the case of unstressed о but not э, е (e.g. маналор, прафесар but тэлефона), the use of ф for foreign f (e.g. форма) and th (e.g. арфаграфа), the latter with some exceptions which had become established by tradition with т (e.g. татар, метад, тэзіс). In other respects, however, the 1933 reforms not only went against the characteristics of Byelorussian but were clearly politically motivated and aimed at harmonising the form of much Byelorussian 'international' lexis with that of Russian.

The most blatant example of this was the creation of a special category of 'international revolutionary words' which were exempt from the normal rules of *akainie* (рэволюцыя, совет, большэвік, комуна, соцыялізм, комунізм, Комітэт, пролетары), alongside spellings such as маналор, геаррафа, кымітэт there could be no linguistic justification for these forms.
Russification was also evident in the treatment of foreign l. Although the 1933 decree recommended the continuation of the Byelorussian practice of representing European 'middle l' sometimes by a hard й (e.g. метал, прагатакол, формула) and sometimes by a soft й (e.g. плыж, лямпа, плыц), it claimed, totally falsely, that the traditionally widespread pronunciation in Byelorussia was predominantly with a hard й, and included among its examples of this a number of forms which had previously been pronounced (and written) with a soft й (e.g. клас, мааналог, калонія). It is no coincidence that the Russian equivalents of all the examples quoted in this section of the decree have a hard й.

Other rules which represented a departure from Byelorussian usage were those concerning the treatment of foreign s, z as predominantly soft when adapting loan-words into Byelorussian (e.g. система, физика), the rejection of forms such as пролетар, пролетары in favour of пролетарий (to be declined like маі) and of the adjectival declension of nouns in -исты (e.g. комуністы) in favour of nouns in -ист (to be declined like брат), all of which represent subordination of Byelorussian linguistic norms to those of Russian.

The one section of the 1933 decree which entirely accorded with the 1930 prajekt and evoked virtually no opposition from those Byelorussians living outside Soviet Byelorussia was that which was concerned with the orthography of Christian names, surnames and топонимы. Like the 1930 prajekt the 1933 decree stated that these should retain the characteristics of the language from which they were taken insofar as these did not conflict with such characteristic Byelorussian features as ака́ніе, дзьека́ніе, цие́ка́ніе, the spelling of vowels after chuintants and the change of в to й in syllable final position.

In complete contrast the final section of the 1933 decree, which dealt with certain points of morphology, almost entirely contradicted the recommendations of the 1930 prajekt. Furthermore, with one exception the rules given all had the effect of making Byelorussian grammatical forms less distinguishable from the corresponding Russian ones. Nowhere is this more evident than in the statement that masculine nouns in the genitive singular should be written mainly with the endings -a, -я: завода, цэха, трактара, інстытута, соцьялізма, універсытэта, правапіса but жалю, бою, гаю, лесу, краю, менту. In accordance with Taraškievič’s grammar the ending -a (-я) was to be used in Byelorussian only for 1) animate nouns; 2) nouns which can be seen or counted (i.e. concrete objects); 3) the names of months. All other nouns (the majority) normally took the ending -y (-ю). On that basis only one of the nouns listed in the 1933 decree with the ending -a (трактара) conformed to the Byelorussian norm. In Russian, on the other hand, the ending -y (-ю) is extremely restricted in its usage: apart from a number of set expressions in which it has become fossilised, it is confined to a very small number of nouns denoting substances and even then is used only when those nouns occur in a quantitative construction.

The other morphological changes contained in the 1933 decree
which violated the norms of Byelorussian were: the abolition of the stressed endings - ámb, - áx in the dative and locative plural of masculine and neuter nouns and their replacement by the endings - ámb, á x (e.g. братам, братах); the unification of the oblique cases of the numerals два and дзве (абодва и абедзве) by the abolition of the formerly distinct feminine forms (дзвёх or дзвэх, дзвём or дзвьом, дзвьама or дзвьома), and of the alternative masculine and neuter forms with the stem vowel o (двох, двом, двама), leaving only those forms which coincided with the Russian forms (двух, двум, двума); the standardisation of the ending of the 2nd person plural of the present tense of first conjugation verbs, regardless of whether they were stressed on the stem or the ending, i.e. not only прац̆уц̆е, чыт̆ац̆е but also вяд̆з̆еце, няс̆еце (in place of ведз̆яţ, нёсц̆е); the replacement of the stressed ending of the 2nd person plural of the imperative mood -ёц̆е (-ăце) by the ending -іц̆е (-иц̆е) e.g. няс̆ец̆е, бяр̆иц̆е and, finally, the exhortation ‘to introduce into the orthography (sic) of Byelorussian active participles, especially when they have a social meaning’\textsuperscript{65}. The key word here is ‘introduce’ — present active participles at least were only rarely used in Byelorussian at this period, a relative clause construction being preferred\textsuperscript{66}. The political motives of the 1933 decree were thus at their most naked in the changes introduced into the morphology of Byelorussian.

V

The decree came into effect on 16 September 1933; from that date all schools and publishing houses were to go over to the new orthography. Reading between the lines of an article in the issue of Žviazda for that day, we get a clear indication that the new orthography was as unpopular with many people within Soviet Byelorussia as it was in Western Byelorussia. The article refers to the ‘as yet not unmasked residue of the ‘nacademy’’ and regrets is that ‘some comrades do not understand’ that ‘the new orthography is one of the concrete manifestations of the struggle the party is waging for the construction of a culture which is national in form and socialist in content’. The Institute of Linguistics of the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences is singled out for particular criticism in this respect. Three years previously the party had rid the Academy of Sciences of its Losiks, Łastoŭskis, Niekras̆evič̆es and Ėwikievic̆es. ‘Who gave those people sitting in the Institute of Linguistics the right to guard their legacy so tenaciously? How could it happen that neither the præsidium of the Academy of Sciences nor the party cell noticed this and took steps to cleanse the Institute of Linguistics of these class enemies and their inheritance?’ Even Communist writers are indicted for being insufficiently vigilant in ‘the struggle with the continuation of the national democratic tendency in linguistics’\textsuperscript{67}. It was against this background that the decree was enforced. Between 1933 and the beginning of the Second World War a number of grammars and school textbooks incorporating the principles of the new orthography were published\textsuperscript{68}. Dissatisfaction with some aspects
of the decree surfaced publicly in a number of articles in newspapers and magazines in the late 1930s50, and again after the war70. In 1951 a Projekt zmien i udakładnieńiai bielaruskaha pravapisu was drawn up by the Orthographical Commission of the Institute of Language, Literature and Art of the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences and its contents discussed at a conference held in the Institute on 25-26 January 195271.

Not until 1957, however, did the Soviet of Ministers of the BSSR issue a new decree72. This decree restored some characteristic features of Byelorussian morphology which had been abolished in 1933: the stressed ending of the 2nd person plural of first conjugation verbs (e.g. брацэ, несцэ) and the distinctive oblique case forms for the feminine gender of the numeral дзве (дзвюх, дзвюм, дзвюма). As far as the orthography was concerned, however, apart from a clarification of the rules governing the use of the apostrophe and б, and the formulation of rules concerning акалинэ and якалинэ in compound words, the 1957 decree contained only minor amendments to its 1933 predecessor — notably the inclusion under the normal rules of акалинэ of the 'international revolutionary words' formerly exempted, and the extension of акалинэ (in the case of unstressed й) and якалинэ (in the immediate pre-tonic syllable) to proper names and toponyms of Slavonic origin or which had long since been assimilated into Byelorussian (e.g. Чарнышўскі, Чарапавец, Нява, Серпец).

These amendments were incorporated in the first officially codified handbook of modern Byelorussian orthography — Прывіты баялаская арфахрафіі і пунктуациі, published by the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences in 1959 — which remains the most recent official statement of the orthographical and punctuation norms of Byelorussian. The changes introduced by the 1933 decree thus remain substantially in force to the present day.

Notes

1. M. R. Sudnik, ‘Da pytania ab historyi farmiravańia bielaruskaj arfahrafičnaj sistemy’, Viesči AN BSSR, 3, 1950, pp. 48-50.
2. The examples quoted in this paragraph are taken from the following works: W. Dunin-Marcinkiewicz, Sielanka, 1846; A. Rypiński, Niaczysčik, Ballada Białoruska, Tottenham, 1853; Rasskazy na beloruskom naręčit, Vilna, 1863; Szymon Reũka, Śmyk bialoruski, Poznań, 1894; A. I. Synok, St Petersburg, 1895; A. I., Skarej u Tomsk, Minsk, 1898; Chto prauđzyvy prjyjaciel biednogo narodu?, London, 1903.
3. In 1846 an attempt by the ethnographer Śpilėski to produce the first grammar and codified orthography of Byelorussian had come to nothing. The Academy of Sciences refused to publish his work on the grounds that it was not scientifically based.
4. See especially the contributions by Ja. Losik, P. A. Rastorgujev, S. M. Niekras hatesči and V. Lastotku in Pracy Akademičnajy konferencyi pa reformie pravapisu i azbuki (14-21 listapada 1926 h.), Inbielkult, Minsk, 1927, pp. 115-65; also U. Dubůik, ‘Projekt litar dla zhuka “dz” i “dž”’, Uzvyśša, 1928, No. 4., pp. 161-77; ‘Bielaruskij zhuk “dz” i litera “dzelo”’, ibid., No. 5., pp. 183-91.
5. Naša niva, 1912, No. 4.
6. ibid., No. 8.
7. One correspondent pointed out that in 1908 only 28 issues of Naša niva had appeared as compared with 38 issues in 1907. Attributing this fact to the difficulties associated with producing the newspaper in both scripts simultaneously, he suggested that it would be better if Naša niva were to appear weekly in one script rather than fortnightly in both (ibid., No. 6).

8. This argument was used by Janka Kupaļa (ibid., No. 4).

9. ibid., No. 5.
10. ibid., No. 6.
11. ibid., No. 4.
12. ibid., No. 4.
13. ibid., No. 20.
14. 'Da našyh čýtačoň', ibid., No. 42.
15. A recent example of this is to be found in Fundamental Byelorussian, Book I, by V. Pashkievich, published in Toronto in 1974. This textbook grammar, which was produced with the aid of a substantial grant from the Canadian Federal Government, totally ignores the orthographical reform of 1933 on the basis of a rather doubtful claim that this reform has never been accepted by Byelorussians living outside the Soviet bloc. The consequence of this is that a book whose aim it should be to describe the language in its standard modern form, uses a system of spelling which is more than forty years out of date! (for an excellent critical review of Fundamental Byelorussian by James Dingley see: JBS, III, 3, London, 1975, pp. 296-9).

16. For a more detailed analysis of the orthographical patterns and inconsistencies of this period see: I. I. Kramko et al., Historyja bielaruskaj litaraturnaj movy, II, Minsk, 1968, pp. 119-26.

17. Exceptions were made for consonants in word final position. This work also advocated the abandonment of the 'Polish' and 'Russian' alphabets and a return to the so-called antykva which would be adapted to express Byelorussian sounds by the introduction of diacritic signs and special letters.

18. 1st ed., Vilna, 1918; 2nd ed., Vilna, 1919; 3rd ed., Vilna, 1920; 4th ed., Vilna-Minsk-Berlin, 1921.

19. Kramko et al., op. cit., p. 163.

20. Bielaruskaja hramatyka dla skol, 1st ed., Vilna, 1918, pp. 3-4.

21. ibid., pp. 85-103.

22. ibid., p. 88. For a discussion of the application of this criterion in modern Byelorussian see: P. Mayo, 'Anomalous spelling in Byelorussian: the replacement of e by a in post-stress syllables', JBS, III, 2, London, 1974, pp. 171-5.

23. Taraškiveič, op cit., p. 102.

24. ibid., p. 4.

25. ibid., p. 102.

26. M. Bajkou, M. Harecki, Praktyčny raśijska — bielaruskii sloŭnik, Minsk, 1924; S. Niekrašeŭič, M. Bajkou, Raśijska — bielaruskii sloŭnik and Biela­ruska — raśijski sloŭnik, Minsk, 1927.

27. Ja. Losik, 'Neustanoŭlenija vypadki našaha pravapisu', Połymia, 1924, 2; A. Bahdanovič, 'Da pytalańja ab neustanoŭlenykh vypadak našaha pravapisu', Połymia, 1925, 7; S. Niekrašeŭič, 'Ab pašyreńni akańnia na čužaziemnyia slovy', Połymia, 1926, 5; A. Losik, Ja. Losik, Da reformy bielaruskaha pravapisu', Połymia, 1926, 6; U. Dubońka, 'Pra naša litaraturnyu movu', Uzujaśa, 1927, 2; 'Niektoryja pryvatnaju vypadki mlauhuńcašči našaje movy', Uzujaśa, 1927, 4; 'Padozuńja (abo padvojnja) zyńćaia i sposab ich aznaceńja na piśmien', Uzujaśa, 1929, 2; V. Volski, 'Da pytalańja pra spróščanje aznaceńja padvojnja zyńćnej na piśmien', Uzujaśa, 1929, 4.

28. Pracy Akademičnaje konferencyj pa reformie bielaruskaha pravapisu i azbuki (14-21 listapada 1926 h.), Inbietkult, Minsk, 1927.

29. ibid., p. 191.
30. ibid., p. 226.
31. ibid., p. 232.
32. ibid., p. 188.
33. ibid., p. 211.
34. 'Ab pašyreńni akańnia na čužaziemnyia slovy', Połymia, 1926, 5.
See P. J. Mayo, A Grammar of Byelorussian, Sheffield, 1976, pp. 8-9.

Bielaunskaj pravapis (projekt), AN BSSR, Minsk, 1930.

R. Astroŭski, Bielaunskaj pravapis, 2nd ed., Vilna, 1930.

Bielaunskaj pravapis (projekt), pp. 26-30.

ibid., pp. 31-6.

ibid., pp. 37-8.

ibid., pp. 49-57.

ibid., pp. 12-13.

ibid., p. 15.

Ab zmiennach i spraščenii bielaruskah pravapisa, Pldanava Savjeta Narodnych Kamisaraŭ BSSR, reproduced in T. P. Łamčioŭ, Bielaruskaja hramatyka. Fanietyka i pravapis, Minsk, 1935, pp. 67-71.

ibid., p. 67.

Pišnieniki BSSR ab reformie pravapisa bielaruskaj movy, Minsk, 1934.

ibid., p. 29.

Prastest Bielaruskahh Navukovahh Tawarystva proci dekretu Savietu Narodnych Kamisaraŭ BSSR ab reformie bielaruskahh pravapisu, Vilna, 1933.

ibid.

Ja. Stankevič, Zmienia hramatyki bielaruskahh jazyka u BSSR, Vilna, 1936.

Ja. Stankevič, Padručnik kryvickaje (bieluarskaje) movy, Regensburg, 1947.

Ja. Stankevič, 'Možnaja palityka balšavikoŭ u Bielaruskaj SSR', Bielaruskii zbornik, 12, Munich, 1955, pp. 49-110, especially pp. 81-100.

Taraškievič, Bielaruskaja hramatyka dla skol, 1st ed., p. 86.

Taraškievič, 'Možnaja palityka balšavikoŭ u Bielaruskaj SSR', p. 83.

Taraškievič, Bielaruskaja hramatyka dla skol, 5th ed., p. 117.

Taraškievič, 'Možnaja palityka balšavikoŭ u Bielaruskaj SSR', pp. 85-6.

Pracy Akademičnaj konferencyi ..., p. 208.

For example, Rastorgujev. (ibid., p. 227).

Bielaruskaj pravapis (projekt), pp. 15, 50, 51.

Łamčioŭ, op. cit., p. 69.

Taraškievič had not felt it necessary to treat these forms separately, subsuming them under the general category of loan-words (Bielaruskaja hramatyka dla skol, 5th ed., pp. 126-7).

The sole exception was in the recommendation of the use of the ending -xa after consonants in the 1st person plural of the imperative mood (e.g. саньма, хі́нма).

Łamčioŭ, op. cit., p. 71.

Taraškievič, Bielaruskaja hramatyka dla skol, 5th ed., p. 73.

Łamčioŭ, op. cit., p. 71.

Taraškievič, Bielaruskaja hramatyka dla skol, 5th ed., p. 102.

'Novy bielaruskaj pravapis', Žviazda, 16 September 1933.

T. P. Łamčioŭ, Bielaruskaja hramatyka. Fanietyka i pravapis, Minsk, 1935; N. I. Šečyk, A. S. Salomienik, Hramatyka bielaruskaj movy, Minsk, 1935; Bielaruskaja hramatyka. Marfałohija (ed. T. P. Łamčioŭ), Minsk, 1936; Ju. A. Šakal, M. I. Żyrik-Łečiń, Hramatyka, č. 1, Minsk, 1938; K. D. Bižnosių, Ju. A. Šakal, Hramatyka bielaruskaj movy, Minsk, 1941; K. I. Hurski, T. P. Łamčioŭ, T. Ž. Sklar, S. L. Rochkind, Kurs sučasnaj bielaruskaj movy. Fanietyka. Marfałohija. Leksika, Minsk, 1941.

K. Hurski, 'Ab bielaruskim pravapisi', Žviazda, 9 April 1938; P. F. Čada-renka, 'Patrebna niecalkadnaje spraščenii bielaruskah pravapisu', Žviazda, 6 July 1938; P. Dzik, 'Da pytania ab sučasnaj bielaruskaj erfa-hrafi', Žviazda, 16 October 1938; Hryščuk, 'Zaúvahi ab bielaruskim pravapis', Literatura i mastactva, 3 July 1939; V. Borisenko, 'O projekte reformy belorusskogho pravopisanija, Sovetskaja Belorussija, 16 February 1939; Raščenja, 'Reforma belorusskogho pravopisanija neobkhodima', Sovetskaja Belorussija, 5 March 1939; A. K. Bondarenko, 'Nabošlejše voprosy belorusskogho pravopisanija, Sovetskaja Belorussija, 9 April 1939; 'О reforme belorusskogho pravopisanija (obzor pisem)', Sovetskaja Belorussija, 3 June 1939.

M. R. Sudnik, 'Da pytaniaŭ ab bielaruskim pravapisi', Nastaŭnicka hazieta, 16 May 1946; P. Dubovič, S. Šeččuk, 'Zmieni neiebachodny', Nastaŭnicka hazieta, 13 June 1946; A. Barsavieč, 'Bols dakladnasci', Nastaŭnie-
In the course of its 11th session, the Society continued its traditional activities of organising lectures and distributing publications. Membership has remained static during the past year, but the Society’s contacts with graduates, students and other persons interested in Byelorussia have continued to develop.

The financial affairs of the Society continue to be conducted on a satisfactory basis, thanks to an increase in the sale of publications, and in particular to a welcome grant from the Byelorussian Charitable Trust amounting to a total of £1,436.00. Generous donations from the Byelorussian Social Clubs in Manchester and Bradford have been of great assistance in enabling us to publish the works of our growing circle of friends in academic life. With income at £2,290 and expenditure at £2,220, there remains a surplus for the year of £70.

Among projects discussed during the session was the question of the Auberon Herbert memorial plaque, a design for which has now

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