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THE START OF WRITING IN BELARUSIAN. REGIONAL AND SOCIAL COMPOSITION OF THE BELARUSIAN REVIVAL OF THE LATE 19TH – EARLY 20TH CENTURY¹

*If all individuals in a particular society
belonged to the same culture,
there would be no need
in the concept of "popular culture". – Peter Burke*

THE EFFORTS TO UNITE A COMMUNITY FOR A COMMON PURPOSE require existence of institutions, which reduce the community's diversity as they select individual elements and ignore the rest.² As a result, the community becomes more homogeneous, and the chosen selection principle may affect the long-term development of the institutions and the community. "Dependence on the chosen path" (path dependence) determines the course of further development, which can be difficult to change (see e.g.: Pierson, 2004: 17-53).

Considering the path dependence factor, it is particularly important to study and analyze the beginning of formation of an institution or community. Thus, in the late 19th – early 20th century the Belarusian national movement (and Belarusians as an ethnic community) had to solve the problem of reduction of diversity and selection of individual political and cultural elements. The debate of that time on national identity can thus be understood in this context. It should be noted that the choice of strategy at that time was rather limited. Out of the usual set of institutions which could facilitate successful nation building – government, civil institutions, church, high culture, etc. – only ethnic culture and language were available in Belarusian case (Kazakievič, 2010: 28).

In such situation, legitimation of culture and language through institutionalization of the literary activity played an exceptional role in the Belarusian movement. To a large degree, the beginning of the national revival as a phenomenon at the turn of the 20th century manifested itself in the transition to literary and journalistic activity in the Belarusian language, which meant overcoming the cultural and political barriers, and creating a new tradition. The people who were involved in that sociolinguistic and at the same time political process were the first generation of bearers of Belarusian culture in the national rather than ethnic understanding.

The process of Belarusian revival (using the terminology of its participants)³ had social, demographic, as well as territorial and temporal dimensions. Con-

¹ Andrej Kazakievič: methodology, information processing and main interpretations. Andrej Asadčy: information gathering, historiography of the subject.

² Particularly notable in this respect was the formation of literary language – a process that always means selection and arrangement of a linguistic array.

³ In the Belarusian journalism and literature of that time revival, perhaps, was more often understood not as a "return to the past", but as receiving a deserving or equal status among other nations.

sideration of these dimensions will be the main focus of our article. We are primarily interested in the first active participants of the cultural movement as a specific social and political group. The study of its structure will give a more accurate understanding of the beginning of institutionalization of a new national community based on ethnic culture and language.

Probably, certain regions, professional and social groups in the Northwestern Krai of the Russian Empire expressed different degrees of activity at the first stage of the Belarusian nation building process. The analysis of the community of active participants of the movement will allow to identify the segments which crystallized and formalized the new institutions and norms. Thus, we will try to more accurately locate the first stage of the Belarusian nation building process from geographic, demographic and sociological points of view.

1. RESEARCH METHODS AND STRATEGY

The most common strategy for studying the Belarusian national movement is focusing on the activities of the most important institutions: cultural and social organizations, published editions, parties, etc. The main attention is paid to the political and cultural leaders, whose creative and civil activity, apparently, (pre)determined the course and semantic content of the process (Bič, 1994; Kaŭka, 1993; Sidarevič, 2009; Turonak, 2006; Šybieka, 2003, and others). While we recognize the importance of this approach for studying the evolution of nation building processes, our goal is to shift the focus of analysis from personalities as individual actors onto the groups. We assume that moving away from key personalities can suggest a more complete understanding of nation building as a social process. It makes even more sense considering that the information on cultural and political development of Belarus at the end of the 19th – beginning of the 20th century, accumulated by historians and researchers of literature, allows for the necessary generalization and systematization.

The main problem in the study of the group of Belarusian cultural figures, as in all such cases, is definition of the boundaries of a group and selection criteria. At the same time, the final circle of people must be wide enough to show significant supra-individual trends. Therefore, we have chosen one basic criterion for selection – publishing of more or less significant texts in Belarusian within the period of 1880–1918.⁴ This criterion is subject to many factors, and is, in our opinion, sufficiently reliable.

The linguistic factor was extremely important for all national movements in the region; hence, participation in the formation of literary language was an important political step. Literary and journalist activity was the main, and often the only Belarusian cultural practice as such in the specified period. Naturally, cultural practices were also complemented by research and publishing activities, but in contrast to the literary process it is difficult to consider them as a separate area of activity of the Belarusian movement members of that time.

This “linguocentrism” may be the subject of significant criticism due to

⁴ This means that, for example, a person who started writing in Polish in 1904, and continued to do so in Belarusian in 1919, does not fit in our sample. In accordance with the logic of the study, it is another generation of the revival.

ignoring the Polish-speaking *krajoŭcy*⁵ and Russian-speaking *zachodnierasist*⁶ authors. In this regard, our sample includes figures who wrote in several languages, provided that one of them was Belarusian. Active participation in the Belarusian cultural movement, but with no publications in Belarusian, should be considered as a specific case that requires formulation of additional criteria. Even if such cases took place, they were individual and thus would not have a significant impact on the resulting statistics.

Concerning the selection of texts significant for the studied period, we completely rest on the reliability of selection conducted by several generations of researchers of the Belarusian movement and literature, including Sciapan Aliksandrovič, Iryna Bahdanovič, Uladzimir Kaźbiaruk, Hienadz Kisialioŭ, Alieh Lojka, Adam Małdzis, Rychor Siemaškiewič, Ivan Šamiakin and others.

The subject of our study included all individuals who published literary and journalist texts in Belarusian significant enough to get into encyclopedias. A most thorough work of the Belarusian literary scholars – the six-volume encyclopedia “Belarusian Writers” (1993–1995) – was used as the basic source. The encyclopedia includes over 1,100 articles that contain complete and systematic information about the life and activities of Belarusian literature representatives as well as bibliographical information on over 600,000 publications. The most systematic and thorough edition on the history of Belarus – “Encyclopedia of the History of Belarus” published in six volumes (1993–2003) – was used as an additional source to verify and refine some biographical information.

Based on the analysis of the materials with biographical and bibliographical information, we compiled a list of 96 individuals, who, one way or another, left their mark in the literary history of Belarus (see Appendix 1). The list seems to be quite representative, which, in our opinion, makes it possible to trace the supra-individual trends. However, this group requires further expansion within the frameworks of new studies. Another problem for the analysis was the uneven information availability. For this reason, the number of members in the group varies depending on different parameters, and is individually indicated in each case.

Time frame of the study. The selected time frame of the study of the first wave of Belarusian revival looks clear – from 1880 to 1918. The upper limit does not require a detailed reasoning. After the collapse of the Russian Empire, the end of World War I and proclamation of the Belarusian People’s Republic (BNR), Belarusian movement began to develop in totally different conditions. A considerable political mobilization of Belarusian activists took place as they joined political parties and organizations. Attempts to establish an independent state or autonomy on a regional, Polish or Soviet basis greatly contributed to this process. These events and subsequent partition of Belarus in 1921 and institutional establishment of the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic completely changed the political status of the Belarusian language and culture, as well as the logic and mechanisms of development of the cultural movement.

⁵ Polish – *krajoŭcy*.

⁶ Literally translated – *West-Russist*.

The choice of the lower limit, the year 1880, is associated with the beginning of Belarusian cultural movement. The 1880s can be considered as the beginning of direct continuity of Belarusian literary (cultural) tradition, although some researchers derive it only from the publication of “Dudka Bielaruskaja” (“The Belarusian Pipe”) by Francišak Bahuševič in 1891 (Turuk, 1921). In addition, the 1880s are noted for a remarkable increase in the number of new authors and expansion of Belarusian cultural and linguistic movement as well as political activity.⁷

The materials on the history of Belarusian literature demonstrate the qualitative changes that occurred in the 1880s. Two major authors who wrote texts in Belarusian appeared in the 1840s. In the next decade, the number of new authors increased to five. Since the 1860s, this number decreased to two, and in the 1870s it dropped to zero. Between the years 1880 and 1889, seven authors joined the literary process, which was even more than in 1890–1899. In addition, it was in the 1880s when the publications on Belarusian history and ethnic culture became systematic and formed a separate study area, which had a very positive impact on the development of the cultural movement and attraction of new activists.

Main parameters of analysis. As noted above, the rise of Belarusian movement was a multi-level process that had its social, demographic and territorial dimensions.⁸ These dimensions will be fixed through a complete set of parameters.

Territorial dimension is analyzed through the study of birth place and place of death of the members of cultural movement. We assume that this will allow us to determine the territorial basis of the Belarusian national movement as well as the influence, which joining the “Belarusian matter” had on one’s life trajectory.

Under *demographic dimension* we mean a set of the following data: year of birth, age of joining the cultural movement, lifetime and date of death.

Under *social dimension*, within the framework of the study, we mean social background, education, profession and the reason (circumstances) of death. As a result, we have ten parameters which, in our opinion, will help to better understand the circumstances of the formation of Belarusian cultural movement and the nature of nation building in the late 19th – early 20th century.

2. GEOGRAPHY OF BIRTH

The issue of spatial localization of the nation building process is rather important for understanding of the circumstances of its origin. Usually, regions show varying activity in the cultural and political movements, and the centers of nation’s “crystallization” may migrate in space. When establishment of the nation is based on the state, the political, economic and nation building centers usually coincide. However, if establishment of the nation takes place with no state support, the situation changes drastically. Particularly important become the zones and regions with more favorable conditions for cultural and political

⁷ It was exactly at the end of the 1870s through the 1880s when the activity of Belarusian narodniks started, including publication of the “Homan” (“Chatter”) magazine. Publications in the newspaper “Minski Listok” (“Minsk Leaflet”) presented another perspective of the Belarusian issue.

⁸ The division into dimensions is rather arbitrary and of no principal importance for us (as opposed to the parameters), so we shall not dwell on its description.

activity, where the direct control from the administrative center is somewhat weakened, for example, due to the fact that the movement is not considered as a threat to the stability of power.

Existence of an area where cultural or political activity can be carried out relatively free greatly simplifies tasks for a national movement. In such circumstances, there are no significant barriers to the formation of cultural and political elite, new cultural tradition, and the system of basic nation building ideas. A classic example of such territory was the Italian Piedmont. East Prussia for Lithuanians and Galicia for Ukrainians can be considered perfect examples from our region. However, such favorable conditions did not exist in the case of Belarusian national movement. The entire territory inhabited by Belarusians belonged to the Russian Empire in the form of several guberniyas (provinces) of the Northwestern Krai, and at the same time was the space of the Russian-Polish struggle for cultural influence on the local population.

The search for the areas relatively favorable for the movement of Belarusian activists leads us to big cities – mainly to Vilnius and St. Petersburg, although no place at that time was favorable enough. These centers of origin of the institutes of Belarusian cultural and political movement (periodicals, organizations, etc.) are described in detail in the Belarusian historiography (Turonak, 2006; Sidarevič, 2007 and others). Therefore, in this section we will focus on the other aspect of territorial distribution – the places where the national agitation found the greatest response, where a more advanced communication system and a corresponding infrastructure existed, and where recruitment to the Belarusian cultural movement of the late 19th – early 20th century took place. We will try to find them by analyzing the national movement representatives' birthplaces.

Endowing the birthplace with a significant political and social content may be subject to fair criticism. Essential, of course, is not the place of birth, but the socialization environment, which could influence joining the national movement. In certain cases, the place of birth may have no meaning at all, e.g. if the family moved to other place shortly after birth, often changed places of residence or lived in cultural isolation. Considering these limitations, we have to admit that the findings will be valuable only if the difference between the regions is absolutely obvious. Furthermore, we should bear in mind the level of mobility, which was not very high during that historical period, so the place of birth often coincided with the place of socialization and even the birthplace of parents.

Geographical center of Belarusian revival. As we noted above, the choice of birthplace as a significant factor in the analysis of biography facts may be subject to criticism. Firstly, the place of birth is not necessarily an indication of the place of socialization, and secondly, it does not determine social and cultural context which could be very different within the same city or town. Nevertheless, the statistics of those born in different districts of even the same province contains significant differences, which, in our opinion, even considering all the restrictions, indicates essential and obvious trends.

The undisputed centers of cultural movement, according to the place of birth of the Belarusian authors of the late 19th – early 20th century, are the four districts which form an integral area stretching along the central part of the ter-

ritory of Belarus: Viliejka (12), Minsk (12), Sluck (10) and Vilnius (9) districts. 43 authors were born in this area, accounting for almost half (45%) of the total number of Belarusian cultural movement activists of the studied period.

This region is highly heterogeneous in all respects – both in religious and ethnic composition, as well as the degree of urbanization. The region includes both the predominantly Catholic Vilnius district and the predominantly Orthodox Sluck district; on top of that it includes Viliejka and Minsk districts with mixed confessional structure. With regard to the ethnic composition of population in these areas, the census of 1897 shows that the majority of population in all districts except Vilnius were ethnic Belarusians. Polish and Jewish minorities were present in each of these districts, but this was the case with other districts of present Belarus as well.

Belarusians made 86,9% of the population of Viliejka district, 78,5% of Sluck district, 59,2% and 25,8% of Minsk and Vilnius districts respectively. The low number of Belarusians in the latter two districts was due to the large share of urban population in Minsk (90,9 thousand out of 277,2 thousand district residents) and Vilnius (154,5 out of 363,3 thousand residents), where Jews constituted the majority, while the number of Belarusians was rather low (9% in Minsk and 4,2% in Vilnius).⁹

However, these cities became important centers of Belarusian activity. Six Belarusian authors were born in Vilnius, which is more than in any other city (the five born in Minsk make it number two). The results for Viliejka and Sluck districts are harder to explain by urbanization factor as the share of urban population there was insignificant. For example, out of 208 thousand inhabitants of Viliejka district, only 3560 people lived in Viliejka and 2615 in Radaškovičy; out of 260,5 thousand inhabitants of Sluck district 14349 people lived in Sluck and 8459 in Niasviž. At the same time, two authors were born in Sluck, and only one in Viliejka.

This situation can be explained by competing nationalisms in the region – Polish, Belarusian, partly Lithuanian and Russian. This, apparently, did not stop ethnic and national mobilization of the local Belarusian population but rather contributed to it. At least it made the ideas of “nation”, “people” and “language” more comprehensible at all levels of society.

In addition to the obvious geographical center of Belarusian movement, we can also identify districts which compose a supplementary area. In Vilnius province we should note Dzisna (6) and Ašmiany (4) districts, Sakolka (4) and Slonim (4) districts in Hrodna province (no significant concentration of activists in other districts of this province was found). Navahrudak district of Minsk province (5) is complementing the range. Zero to two authors were born in other districts of Belarus and Lithuania, which greatly increases the random factor. For this reason, all other territories can be attributed to the periphery of the cultural revival of the late 19th – early 20th century (see Figure 1).

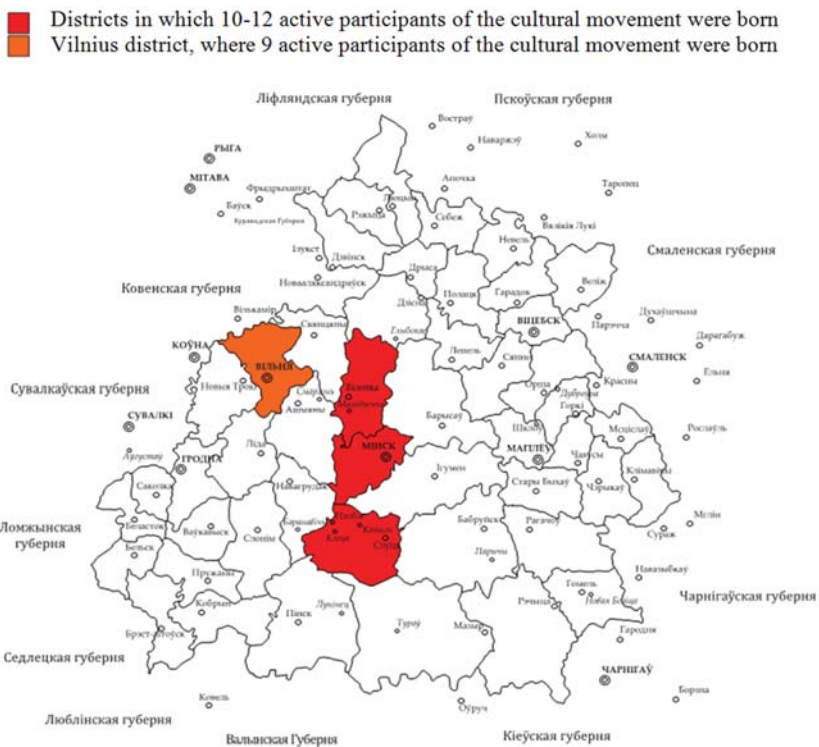
If we consider the situation at the level of provinces, the absolute leader is Vilnius province. 35 people representing 36,5% of the total number of activists on the list were born there. As we noted above, of particular importance are Vilnius, Viliejka, Dzisna and Ašmiany districts. Minsk province has almost

⁹ Hereinafter population figures are based on the results of the 1897 census.

the same number (34 persons). The leaders in this case are Minsk, Sluck and Navahrudak districts. These two provinces formed the center of the cultural movement. Hrodna province (12 persons) did not even reach half of their importance; in addition, the authors' birthplaces were scattered without any specific concentration (0 to 4 persons) However, Sakolka and Slonim districts can be considered the most important in the province. The remaining provinces of the Northwestern Krai are considerably inferior as to the quantity of activists' representation. Only four Belarusian authors were born in Viciebsk province and four in Mahilioŭ province (0 to 2 persons per district, see Table 1).

FIGURE 1

Geographical centre of the cultural revival of the late 19th – early 20th century
(N=43 out of 96 persons of the sample)



These data may reflect certain trends. First of all, the areas with high concentration of Belarusian authors' birthplaces form an integral region which is slightly different from the conventional stereotypes of Viliejka, Minsk and Sluck districts. The region can be extended by adding Vilnius district, but mainly because of the significance of Vilnius itself. As the analysis of other aspects of the distribution shows, certain activity of Hrodna province is also notable, especially in the western districts.

TABLE 1
 Geography of birth of the cultural movement activists (N=96)¹⁰

<i>Province</i>	<i>Number of people</i>	<i>%</i>
Vilnius	35	36,45
Viciebsk	4	4,17
Hrodna	12	12,50
Mahilioŭ	4	4,17
Minsk	34	35,42
Kaunas	2	2,08
Chernihiv	1	1,04
Smolensk	0	0,00
Other	4	4,17
<i>Total</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>100</i>

3. FAMILY AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND

Despite the fact that social nature of the Belarusian national movement is a matter of constant debate, no special studies of social origin of its activists were carried out in Belarusian historiography. Researchers are predominantly studying ideology of the movement, totally missing any detailed analysis of its social origin. Such approach provokes formation of certain stereotypes, and very often ideological orientation of a political group within the movement is associated with the social background.

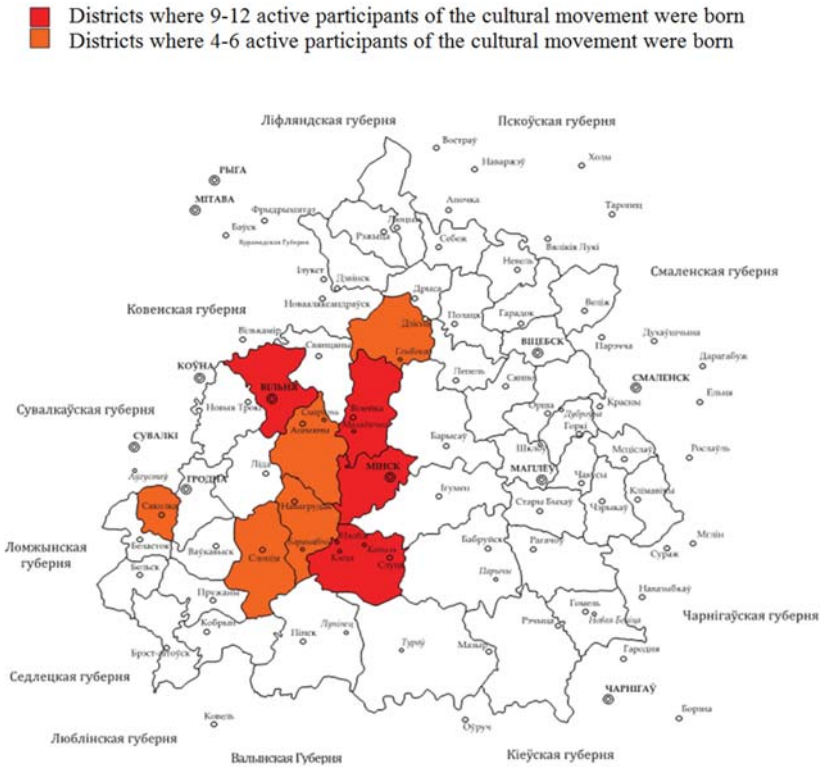
The Soviet historiography emphasized the Marxist schemes of Belarusian movement analysis. The critics of Belarusian movement tried to find manifestations of (small) bourgeoisie within it (Turuk, 1921; Harunovič, 1930; Abecedarski, 1969; Karniejčyk, 1969, and others). Such approach can also be found in the works of representatives of the official state historiography in the period of independent Belarus (Traščanok, 2005, and others). The ideas of the noble (szlachta) nature of Belarusian movement and its isolation from peasant masses were also repeated by some other authors. They explain the Belarusian movement's cultural, social and political distancing from predominantly Orthodox peasants by its nobility (Polish Catholic) background.

A contrary view – understanding the Belarusian movement as peasant (popular) in its nature – is also quite common among Belarusian scholars (Ihnatoŭski, 1925; Bič, 1994; Sidarevič, 2001, and others), as well as some Western authors. As an example, we can recall a well-known study by Nicholas Vakar (Vakar, 1956), which influenced the English-speaking audience. Due to the limited number of works on Belarus in English language, the concept of Belarusian movement as plebeian still has some weight abroad.

¹⁰ Hereinafter in tables N indicates the number of people from the list for whom the relevant information was available.

FIGURE 2

The centre and the supplementary area of the cultural revival of the 19th – early 20th century (N=66 out of 96 persons of the sample)



The idea of peasant nature of the Belarusian movement remains very popular in Polish historiography (Radzik, 1995). Polish researchers are often using it to explain weakness of the national movement and inability to create a strong coalition with more educated social strata.

The absence of specialized studies and the existence of different approaches to social background of the movement make the attempts to accumulate this material increasingly important. Our analysis of social origin of the representatives of Belarusian cultural movement of the late 19th – early 20th century provides an opportunity to see the issue in more detail (see Table 2).

We managed to identify the social origin of 77 persons. The calculations demonstrate that the cultural movement's founders had a rather balanced structure. The descendants of peasant families represent the largest group which make just over one-third of the total (35,1%). This fact confirms the great importance of peasants in the movement. However, almost as many persons (31,2%) appeared of noble origin and formed the second social pole. Another third came from other social groups: workers, bureaucrats, intellectuals, etc.

FIGURE 3

The centre, the supplementary area and the periphery of the cultural revival of the late 19th – early 20th century (N=82 out of 96 persons of the sample)

- Districts where 9-12 active participants of the cultural movement were born
- Districts where 4-6 active participants of the cultural movement were born
- Districts where 2 active participants of the cultural movement were born

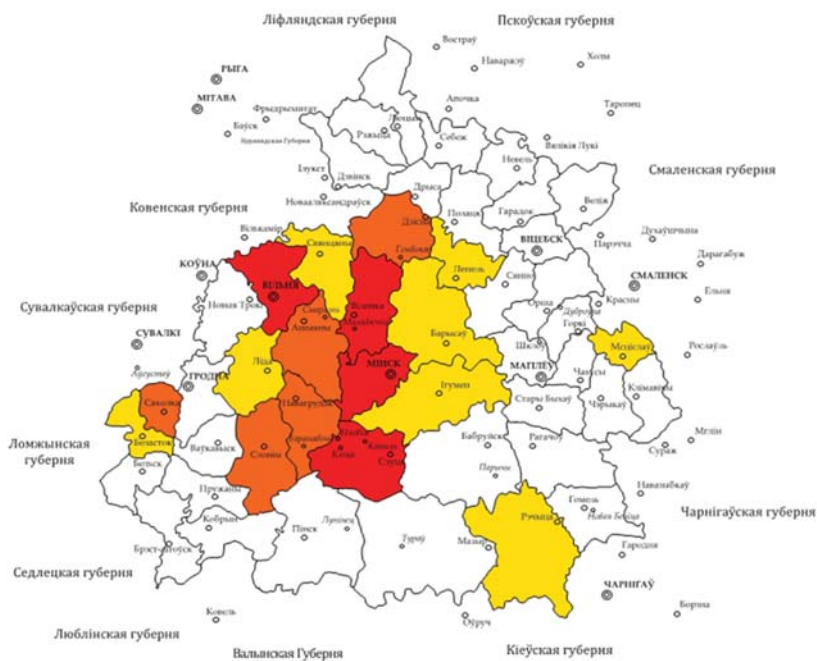


TABLE 2

Social origin of the cultural movement's active participants (N=77)

<i>Social/professional group</i>	<i>Number of people</i>	<i>%</i>
Peasants	27	35,1
Nobility	24	31,1
Intelligentsia	5	6,5
Workers	4	5,2
Bureaucrats	4	5,2
Foresters	4	5,2
City dwellers	3	3,9
Leaseholders	3	3,9
Priests	2	2,6
Other (physician)	1	1,3
<i>Total</i>	<i>77</i>	<i>100</i>

These data show that Belarusian cultural movement was a balanced coalition of people originating from peasantry, nobility and other social groups. For a better understanding of the situation, we suggest to compare the Belarusian movement's composition with the social structure of Belarusians according to the census of 1897. We see that representation of nobility in the cultural movement was much higher than its share in the Belarusian population of the Northwestern Krai (1,77% according to the census) while representation of peasants was significantly lower (92,14% according to the census). However, this fact can be considered as a natural consequence of literacy level within these social groups. In the analysis of social origin, the low significance of the persons coming from priests' families (2,6%) should be noted. It confirms the weak influence of religious institutions on Belarusian revival. The share of intelligentsia was also rather small (6,5%).

4. GENERATIONS, AGE OF JOINING, RECRUITMENT RATE

In general, the demographic profile of the Belarusian national movement is rather well known. Young people, who had a gap with previous generations in the choice of social strategies, ideas, methods of cultural activity and so on, were the primary actors of "Belarusian matter". At that, youth is a rather blurred and polysemic parameter, therefore we will consider the age factor and the circumstances of joining the Belarusian cultural movement in more detail.

Generations and years of birth. This parameter may reveal the social context in which representatives of the Belarusian movement were born, the generation they belong to, and the historical circumstances in which their primary socialization took place. If we analyze the years of birth by decades, the data show that only a few active members of the cultural movement of the late 19th – early 20th century were born before 1860 (see Table 3). Only eight people were born before the uprising of 1863–1864 and could thus have a social experience of the "old" system of cultural and political relations in the region. In the following decade a gradual increase of their number occurred: eight Belarusian authors were born in the 1860s and nine in the 1870s. But the real boom happened in the 1880s, when 37 activists of the first wave of Belarusian cultural movement were born, or 40,2% of the total number of the activists considered. The number slightly dropped to 32,6% in the 1890s.

Thus, the first Belarusian revival was pretty much carried out by people born in the 1880s, whose socialization began in the 1890s. Apparently, social, economic, and possibly intellectual causes of the Belarusian movement as a mass phenomenon should be sought in that period. In addition, the obtained figures rather accurately demonstrate a significant generational gap between the activists born before and after 1880.

The decrease of representation of persons born in the 1890s can be explained by the closeness to the upper time limit of the study. However, representatives of this age group were between 18 and 28 years old in 1918, which cannot be considered a too young age for inclusion in the literary and journalistic activities. Perhaps of certain significance was relatively late age of joining the Belarusian movement, which was typical for its beginning. It happened due to

the fact that the institutions of early socialization – family, primary education, local community – played a minor role in dissemination of the national idea, or did not exist at all.

TABLE 3

Generations of active participants of the cultural movement (N=92)

<i>Decade of birth</i>	<i>Number of activists</i>	<i>%</i>
1820s	1	1,1
1830s	2	2,2
1840s	3	3,3
1850s	2	2,2
1860s	8	8,6
1870s	9	9,8
1880s	37	40,2
1890s	30	32,6
<i>Total</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>100</i>

The age of inclusion in the cultural movement. Apparently, the age of inclusion in the active cultural movement through publication of works in Belarusian reflects not so much a desire or intention of an individual, but rather the availability of appropriate infrastructure. Significant recruitment of new authors is possible only due to availability of regular publishing and readership. We assume that accessibility and the mass spreading of publications contributes to younger age of joining the movement. In the case of Belarusian language, regular editions appeared only in the early 20th century, and a stable literary community was formed after the founding of Naša Niva, which soon became the main mechanism for recruitment of new authors into Belarusian literary activity.

Overall, the findings confirm the fact that most of cultural revival activists and national idea creators were young people, although the presence of older authors was not uncommon. Thus, 76% of the cultural movement's activists started to publish in Belarusian before 30 years old. The most significant recruitment age is 21-25 years old, as the activists of this age make up almost one-third (32,6%), followed by persons younger than 21 years old (more than a quarter, or 27%). 16,9% made their first contribution to the cultural movement at 26-30 and another 12,4% made it at 31-35. Activists over 35 years old account for only about 11% (see Table 4).

Apparently, cultural work attracted people who were just starting their professional activity, as well as students and graduates. This supports the fact that the main channel of dissemination of the idea of Belarusian culture and nation was professional activity, professional environment and communication within the higher education system.

In this context, the authors who started Belarusian cultural activity in a relatively late age – after 40 years old – are worth a particular consideration. Out of the eight persons represented in the study, six were involved in the literary and cultural process in the 1880s and 1890s. Thus, recruitment of the “old” authors is rather a phenomenon of the very beginning of the revival, when

relatively old people began to engage in the formation of a new cultural context influenced by ethnicity politicization.

TABLE 4

The age of active inclusion in the cultural movement (N=89)

<i>Age at the time of first publication in Belarusian, years</i>	<i>Number of activists</i>	<i>%</i>
under 21	24	27,0
21–25	29	32,6
26–30	15	16,8
31–35	11	12,4
36–40	2	2,2
41–45	3	3,4
46–50	1	1,1
over 50	4	4,5
<i>Total</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>100</i>

This may reflect latent processes of the birth of *Belarusianness*, which could not find a public channel of manifestation until the end of the 19th century, and fully revealed in the cultural activity of such people as Francišak Bahuševič. This, however, does not mean that only representatives of the older generation were active in the revival of the 1880s and 1890s, as they made up only half of the 13 authors. However, late joining the literary work is almost exclusively characteristic for the 19th century. In the 20th century it became a matter of younger generation.

Recruitment rate. The analysis of expansion of the cultural movement by year clarifies certain circumstances and factors of movement's growth. The rate of new authors' appearance (compared to the age of inclusion in the cultural movement) even more depends on the availability of necessary infrastructure in the form of publishing houses and periodicals, as well as on a more or less wide readership. This analysis can be a good indicator of the infrastructure's state and its relationship with the audience.

If we split the study period in five-year intervals, the situation looks as shown in the Table 5. The first significant surge of recruitment took place in the late 1880s and beginning of the 1890s, when ten new authors appeared. In this context, the early 1880s and late 1890s look rather ineffectual, as at that time only two and one authors appeared respectively. While for the 1880s such situation can be explained by the first attempts to create the infrastructure, the reasons for decline in the late 19th century are not so obvious. Altogether, 14,1% of the analyzed authors began their literary activity in the 19th century (Table 5).

A certain slowdown of the cultural movement at the end of the 19th century was a temporary phenomenon. By the beginning of the new century, this process starts to snowball. Nine new authors (9,8%) appeared in 1900–1904, while the following five-year period was a real boom which produced 28 new activists (30,4%). In 1910–1914, the rate of new authors' appearance increased to 33 persons (35,9%). But the last incomplete five-year period shows a reduction of the overall contribution to nine persons (9,8%).

TABLE 5
The rate of new authors' recruitment (N=92)

<i>The years of first publication</i>	<i>Number of people</i>	<i>%</i>
1880–1884	2	2,2
1885–1889	5	5,4
1890–1894	5	5,4
1895–1899	1	1,1
1900–1904	9	9,8
1905–1909	28	30,4
1910–1914	33	35,9
1915–1918	9	9,8
<i>Total</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>100</i>

Thus, the most fruitful period for the cultural movement was 1905–1914, which naturally reflects the changes in national policies after the revolution of 1905–1907 and the emergence of Belarusian periodical press, specifically the *Naša Niva* newspaper. In this regard, rapid growth of the number of authors immediately after the appearance of new publications indicates that they well responded to the expectations of at least a part of national community. World War I and the following political instability had a negative impact on the growth of literary activity, which was probably compensated by a significant growth of political participation.¹¹

5. EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY

Education. The level of education usually distinguishes the cultural elites and cultural movement's activists from the majority of population. Virtually all national cultural movements were created by intellectuals whose work was important at the early stages of the movement formation and development. According to the well-known structuralist scheme of Miroslav Hroch, every national movement passed this universal "cultural stage" (Hroch, 2000: 13–14). The interest in national culture, comprehension of its value, practices of its systematization and founding of a new tradition require a high level of competence. In this regard, Belarusian national movement was no exception.

One of the parameters which distinguishes the active participants of the movement as a group is a rather high level of education (given that the literacy rate among Belarusians in 1897 was as low as 13,5%).¹² Out of 85 persons on whom information is available, more than a third (38,8%) had higher education, which is a rather high rate (see Table 6). St. Petersburg (St. Petersburg University in the first place) was the most popular place of education, but the activists also studied in Tartu, Moscow, Riga, Warsaw and Kyiv.

About 28% had higher than basic education, having graduated from religious and teachers' seminaries, gymnasia, drama schools and similar institu-

¹¹ A shorter period – four years instead of five – also had its influence.

¹² Overall literacy rate in Belarus at the end of the 19th century was 25,7%.

tions, although at the end of the 19th century a very small part of the Belarusian population (8320 people) had such level of education. Only 28,3% of the Belarusian movement leaders graduated from the institutions that can be attributed to the lower level of education: vocational and public schools, courses, etc. Self-education, as the study reveals, was not common among the movement activists: it took place in only four cases (4,7%).

TABLE 6

Education level of the active participants of cultural movement (N=85)

<i>Institution of graduation</i>	<i>Number of people</i>	<i>%</i>
University, institute	33	38,8
Religious seminary	7	8,2
Teachers' seminary, higher courses	5	5,9
Gymnasium, building school, drama school, lyceum, art school	12	14,1
Vocational school, public school, courses	24	28,3
Self-education	4	4,7
<i>Total</i>	<i>85</i>	<i>100</i>

Professional activity. The transition from ethnic or regional to national consciousness involves an appropriate system of communication, augmentation and transmission of knowledge about the country and the nation. Different social groups play their particular roles in the formation of such a system. Typically, nationalism researchers acknowledge the important role of intelligentsia elite in the process. The role of intelligentsia (in various meanings of this word) in the Belarusian movement of the late 19th – early 20th century has been commonly recognized and has hardly been seriously doubted. Our information, based on the data on 84 writers, generally confirms the findings of the previous authors, but also helps to clarify some important historical details.

Regarding the scope of professional activity of the representatives of national movement, lecturers/teachers were most numerous, as they made up more than 26% of the sample. This is the most representative layer of the Belarusian cultural movement, but still it accounts for only a quarter of the total number of activists. Interestingly, bureaucrats took the second place (13,1%), the fact which researchers rarely note. Other professional groups make up from 8% to 1%.

Combining close professions in one group makes the situation even more evident. The total number of representatives of the professions that can be referred to as cultural sphere (lecturers/teachers, scientists, librarians, actors, artists, publishers, journalists) account for a half of all activists (51,2%). We also have to emphasize the fact (another one often missed by researchers) that the majority of them were the first-generation intelligentsia. They should not be assigned the properties of a stable social and professional group with traditions of cultural and family continuity;¹³ neither should we apply here a well-known formula of the intelligentsia which started to “awaken” the popular

¹³ In this way the movement is very different from what happened, for example, in the 1980s, when the Belarusian cultural movement included many intellectuals by origin.

masses. In fact, the first generation of the Belarusian movement activists were peasants or nobility who “woke up from the ethnic sleep”.

The number of bureaucrats in broad sense – civil servants, postal workers, military men – increased to 20,2%. This evidence demonstrates that the workers of state institutions were not completely isolated from the movement, and about one fifth of the movement members came from that environment. As for other groups, we should note the insignificance of priests (only 7,1%) and about the same number of workers and skilled industry professionals (see Table 7).¹⁴

TABLE 7

The sphere of professional activity at the first stage of joining the cultural movement, (N=84)

<i>The sphere of professional activity</i>	<i>Number of people</i>	<i>%</i>
Culture, science, education	43	51,2
Administration, post office	11	13,1
Industry (worker)	7	8,3
Orthodox/Catholic church	6	7,1
Education (student)	4	4,8
Forestry and agriculture	3	3,6
Law (lawyer)	3	3,6
Healthcare (pharmacist, doctor)	2	2,4
Other	5	5,9
<i>Total</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>100</i>

Significantly, despite the big share of activists of peasant and nobility origin, there were almost no people who returned to work in agriculture or forestry as villagers, foresters, tenants or landlords. In our group, they are represented by one person for each position (2,7% in total). As we can see, the number of agricultural workers (not by origin, but by the field of employment) was very small. Industry was only represented by workers while the financial sector was not represented in any form. The service sector in the Belarusian movement was presented mainly by the persons who had private businesses: lawyers, pharmacists, etc.

So, the professional base of the Belarusian movement was intelligentsia, and particularly the first-generation intellectuals who engaged in the national movement as a result of social mobility. Bureaucrats and workers of state institutions also played a certain role in it. Meanwhile, the share of those working in production (agriculture, industry, services) was relatively low – 3,6%, 8,3% and 6% respectively. These figures may partly explain a very limited capacity of the national movement to attract funding for its support and development.

6. LIFE LENGTH; CAUSES, DATES AND PLACES OF DEATH

Causes of death. In the analysis of Belarusian movement, of interest is not only the date of birth and inclusion in the cultural and political activity, but also the

¹⁴ Lawyers, pharmacists, an architect, engineers, doctors.

circumstances surrounding the end of the life path, which allows to determine how participation in the national movement influenced a person's destiny. The most interesting in this context is a detailed look into the causes of death. In this regard, the situation in Belarusian movement does not seem normal even considering the wars and other political and social cataclysms that took place at that time in Belarus. Only about 60% of representatives of the first wave of the revival died from natural causes – 9,2% died from diseases at young age and 51,4% died because of old age. This is quite a small rate of natural deaths, even taking into account population losses in wars and revolutions. So, participation in the national movement in the late 19th – early 20th century may be qualified as a significant risk factor that increased the chance of a violent death. Such was the fate of almost 40% of the movement activists (see Table 8).

TABLE 8

Circumstances of death of cultural movement's active participants (N=76)

<i>Causes of death</i>	<i>Number of people</i>	<i>%</i>
Natural causes (age)	39	51,4
Repressions (execution, death in custody)	21	27,6
Early disease	7	9,2
Murder	3	4
Disappearance	2	2,6
Military actions	2	2,6
Suicide	2	2,6
<i>Total</i>	<i>76</i>	<i>100</i>

According to our information, 21 people (27,6%) were killed during repressions (shot or died in prison), three people (3,9%) were killed because of political reasons or died under mysterious circumstances, and two were killed during World War I (2,6%). Suicides can also be added to this group, as they were apparently caused by political pressure and the threat of repressions (Usievalad Ihnatoŭski in 1931, Zmicier Źylunovič in 1937) as well as the questionable accident (Janka Kupala in 1942).

Thus, the fate of almost half of the first generation of Belarusian activists was tragic. Involvement in the Belarusian cultural and political movement not only failed to improve the social status and gain recognition of the public institutions, but on the contrary, often led to negative consequences.

Decades of death. So, what years brought the biggest human losses to the first generation of the national movement? If we analyze decades, the increase in mortality begins in the 1910s, which was partly due to the gradual aging and partly due to the war and revolutions (see Table 9).

In the 1920s, despite the increasingly aging population, mortality rate slightly lowered. Significant growth of human losses started in the 1930s: 20 people died (23,3%), or almost a quarter of the total number of activists. However, the losses were caused not only by repressions, but also by natural reasons – people born in the 1880s began to reach the age of fifty. Interestingly, in the 1940s the losses were almost similar in spite of World War II – 24,4% died. A part of

the activists died from repressions before the war or after it, while those who lost their lives during the military actions were very few. Since the 1950s, the losses reduced significantly both as a result of termination of repressions and due to demographic reasons. The last representative of the generation, Zoška Vieras, died from old age in 1991.

TABLE 9

Decades of death of the cultural movement's active participants (N=86)

<i>Decades of death</i>	<i>Number of people</i>	<i>%</i>
before 1900	2	2,3
1900s	3	3,5
1910s	11	12,8
1920s	9	10,5
1930s	20	23,3
1940s	21	24,4
1950s	10	11,6
1960s	3	3,5
after 1970	7	8,1
<i>Total</i>	<i>86</i>	<i>100</i>

Given the life circumstances of the first generation of the Belarusian movement, the average lifetime of 46,3 years for the entire sample looks rather low. However, 22 persons (25,9%) lived over 70 years old, and only 15,5% were not able to reach their 40 (see Table 10).

TABLE 10

Lifetime of the cultural movement's active participants (N=85)

<i>Lifetime</i>	<i>Number of people</i>	<i>%</i>
Under 20	1	1,2
21–30	5	5,9
31–40	7	8,2
41–50	17	20,0
51–60	15	17,6
61–70	18	21,2
over 70	22	25,9
<i>Total</i>	<i>85</i>	<i>100</i>

Thus, despite the repressions and other political circumstances, the leaders of Belarusian revival were able to fulfil themselves and make at least some contribution to the development of Belarusian culture and political movement. Considering the fact that most of the authors joined the movement before 30 years old, they had at least a decade for their activity and avoided becoming a lost generation, unlike those who joined the movement in the 1920s. The repressions had a particularly severe impact on the activists at the age over 40. Many of those who were lucky to survive that period lived to the old age.

Place of death. The spatial localization of life end may indicate positive or negative influence of participation in the national movement on receiving social status and recognition of state and society.

The differences in localization of the beginning and the end of life for the representatives of Belarusian movement seem very significant. Only slightly more than a third ended their lives at home (37,2%), the rest were forced to leave Belarus for various reasons. Different places of the beginning and the end of life of the movement activists partly reflect the trend of urbanization that took place in the region. However, for many activists moving to a city resulted in execution or imprisonment.

The most significant place of ending life in Belarus in terms of numbers was Minsk – ten people died there (four of them were executed). Only single cases took place in other cities. These figures do not look impressive, especially considering the importance of Minsk and Minsk district as the places of birth. The next important place was Vilnius (being a part of the Russian Empire, inter-war Poland and Soviet Lithuania) and its surroundings with eight deaths, which shows the importance of this city for the cultural movement. As a place of death from natural causes, Vilnius is far ahead of Minsk – only one of the eight activists was killed. About twenty people died at home or in the area close to the place of birth. It mainly concerns those who died of natural causes before the Soviet political repressions started. No particular tendencies can be observed in the rest of the cases in Belarus (see Table 11).

TABLE 11

Place of death of the cultural movement's active participants (N=78)

<i>Place of death (contemporary borders)</i>	<i>Number of people</i>	<i>%</i>
Belarus	29	37,2
Russia	25	32,1
Vilnius and the neighbourhood	7	8,9
Poland	6	7,7
Ukraine (including the Crimea)	6	7,7
USA	2	2,6
Lithuania (excluding Vilnius region)	2	2,6
Central Asia	1	1,2
<i>Total</i>	<i>78</i>	<i>100</i>

Russia is by far leading among other countries of death with 25 deaths there (32,1%). This is almost equal to the number of deaths in Belarus. The exact place of life end of a big part of the Belarusian movement representatives is impossible to determine, for the rest it was Moscow and St. Petersburg (Leningrad). With few exceptions, their deaths took place after 1930. At least 16 of the 25 persons were executed or died in prison.

Some activists also died in Ukraine (six people died in Kyiv, the Crimea, and other places) and Poland (six lives ended in Warsaw, Krakow, Auschwitz). Distant emigration was not common – only two people died in the United States.

The geography of the place of death indicates the extremely violent consequences, which members of the cultural movement faced due to their activity.

Only about a third of the activists died in Belarus (though the number reaches almost a half if we add Vilnius). In addition, many were killed, executed or died in prison. The second important country of death was Russia, but in most cases it served only as a place of political punishment. Finally, distant emigration was not popular among this generation.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of biographical data of the Belarusian cultural movement activists indicates the existence of an area in the central and north-western parts of the contemporary Belarus (a part of this territory is now outside the borders of Belarus), where the highest rate of recruitment of the Belarusian cultural movement members occurred in the late 19th – early 20th century. This allows us to locate the geographical center, supplementary area, and the periphery of the first wave of Belarusian revival and thus form a more accurate understanding of its social and cultural context. This region had ethnically and religiously mixed population and at that time was a field of competition between various nation building movements. Most probably, education became the main factor of promotion of the idea of Belarusian nation and culture.

The analysis of the activists' social origin reveals that the first wave of Belarusian revival included a fairly balanced coalition of people originating from peasantry, nobility, and other social groups. Because of this fact the cultural movement cannot be considered as a predominantly peasant or noble. It was rather a complex and heterogeneous social phenomenon, which generally corresponded to the nation building models of the region.

The Belarusian cultural movement experienced a significant generation gap. Almost 70% of its activists were born in the 1880s and 1890s, while older generations are represented sporadically. The movement activists usually published their first works in Belarusian between 21 and 25 years old, as well as before 21 (together more than half of the sample). However, more mature writers also made their contribution. The phenomenon of late inclusion into the cultural movement (at the age of over 40) took place only in the 19th century. Predictably, the main period of the new authors' recruitment took place in 1905–1914, when the necessary publishing infrastructure appeared.

The educational level of the representatives of Belarusian revival of the late 19th – early 20th century was rather high. More than one third of the activists had higher education; about the same number of people had education higher than basic. By professional composition at the time of first publications in Belarusian, representatives of culture and education clearly dominated, accounting for more than a half of all activists. Obviously, the main channels of political and cultural communication were formed in that environment. About 20% of the total number of activists were state servants, while the rest included other professional groups. The agricultural and financial sectors were virtually not represented at all, and the industrial sector was represented only by a small group of workers. The movement also included a few people who had their private businesses (lawyers, architects, and other).

Consideration of the circumstances of deaths of activists demonstrates that they had to work in rather unfavorable environment. About 40% of them died

violently, and more than a quarter were killed during the repressions. The average lifetime of the activists from our list was 46,3 years. The largest human losses among the first generation of the Belarusian cultural movement occurred in the 1930s and 1940s, while the losses as a result of military actions were rare. However, only 15% of the movement activists did not reach the age of 40, which means that most of them still had 10-20 years to contribute to the “Belarusian matter”. Moreover, about 25% of the activists died after 70 years old. Regarding the place of death, the research shows a clear trend of moving to areas other than place of birth, particularly because of repressions.

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APPENDIX 1.

THE LIST OF ACTIVE MEMBERS OF THE BELARUSIAN CULTURAL MOVEMENT,
LATE 19TH – EARLY 20TH CENTURY

1. Abrantovič Fabijan
2. Aliachnovič Francišak
3. Aŭdziej Vikiencij
4. Bahdanovič Maksim
5. Bahuševič Francišak
6. Biadulia Zmitrok

7. Biryła Sciopka
8. Budźka Edvard
9. Bujło Kanstancyja
10. Burbis Aliaksandr
11. Byčkoŭski Adam
12. Byčkoŭski Anton
13. Caprynskaja Aliena
14. Chliabcevič Jaŭhien
15. Ciotka (Paškiewič Alaiza)
16. Čarnocki Napalieon
17. Čarnyšewič Chwiedar
18. Daraškievič Januk
19. Drazdovič Jazep
20. Duž-Dušeŭski Klaŭdzij
21. Dvarčanin Ihnat
22. Dyla Jazep
23. Dziarkač Anatoł
24. Epimach-Šypila Branislaŭ
25. Fałski Usievalad
26. Farbotka Juzik
27. Hančaryk Michail
28. Harecki Maksim
29. Harun Alieś
30. Hmyrak Liavon
31. Holub Uladzislaŭ
32. Hurlo Alieś
33. Ivanoŭski Vaclaŭ
34. Jadvihin Š.
35. Jalienski Piotr
36. Jełski Aliaksandr
37. Imšeniek Chwiedar
38. Kahaniec Karuś
39. Kančar Jaŭsiej
40. Kančeŭski Ihnat
41. Karavajčyk Paval
42. Kolas Jakub
43. Kupala Janka
44. Lastoŭski Vaclaŭ
45. Liavickaja Vanda
46. Liavicki Jazep
47. Liaŭkovič Illia
48. Liejka Kandrat
49. Liosik Jazep
50. Lobik Liavon
51. Luckiewič Anton
52. Luckiewič Ivan
53. Lučyna Janka
54. Mialieška Michaś
55. Nahrodski Zyhmund
56. Pačopka Baliaslaŭ
57. Pačopka Janka
58. Palujan Siarhiej
59. Paŭlovič Albiert

60. Piaciełski Sciapan
61. Pietraškievič Ąlfons
62. Pietrukoŭ Michail
63. Pilipaŭ Ivan
64. Prosty Piotra
65. Radzievič Lieapold
66. Rak-Michajloŭski Symon
67. Samoĵla Uladzimer
68. Siemaškievič Ivan
69. Sierada Ivan
70. SierŹputoŭski Aliaksandr
71. Skandrakoŭ Siarhieĵ
72. Smolič ArkadŹ
73. Stankievič Adam
74. Stary Ulas
75. Svajak Janka
76. Svajak Kazimir
77. Svieliačok Janka
78. Źantyr Fabijan
79. Źčupak Juzia
80. Źemiet-Palačanski Jan
81. Źpet Jazep
82. Tapčeuški Fieliks
83. Taraškievič Branislaŭ
84. Tatur Hienryk
85. Traščkoŭskaja Zofja
86. Tukierkies Adam
87. Ulasaŭ Aliaksandr
88. Umiaſtoŭski Franc
89. Varonka Jazep
90. Vasilieŭski Danila
91. Vieras Zoška
92. Vitan-Dubiejkoŭski Liavon
93. Ziamkievič Ramuałd
94. Ziaziulia Andreĵ
95. Źurba Janka
96. Źylunovič Zmicier