Without doubt this must be the first textbook grammar of Byelorussian written specifically for English-speaking people. *Fundamental Byelorussian* is published by a special committee set up by the Byelorussian Institutes of Arts and Sciences in the United States and Canada. Financial assistance ($6000) was provided by the Canadian Citizenship Branch of the Department of the Secretary of State, so that the book may be seen as reflecting the lively interest of the Canadian Federal Government in the national minorities living in Canada.

It was perhaps one of the author's primary intentions to write a textbook which would help the children of Byelorussian parents now living in English-speaking areas to learn the language. They, and others who wish to learn Byelorussian for whatever reason, will reasonably expect a textbook grammar of the language to describe it in its standard, most commonly accepted form. They might also expect to learn something about Byelorussia from such a textbook. Any reader of this book will therefore make two basic demands of it: firstly, that it should teach forms of the language accepted by the majority of its speakers both inside Byelorussia and outside, and secondly, that the material should be presented clearly and intelligibly.

As regards presentation of material, the book's most obvious shortcoming is that grammatical rules and explanations are given in both Byelorussian and English. May we not assume that, if the Byelorussian explanations had been omitted, book 1 would have been half the length and so could have included the material scheduled for book 2, publication of which, as things now stand, depends on the generosity of the Canadian government and individual contributors. However this may be, questions of presentation are very much secondary to the actual material being presented.

In the foreword we read: 'The grammar in *Fundamental Byelorussian*, like all grammars up until the first Soviet reform of Byelorussian grammar in 1933, is based on that of the eminent Byelorussian linguist Branislau Tarashkiewich. Many of the indigenous characteristics of the Byelorussian language were wiped out by this reform and were replaced by rules and words altogether alien to the Byelorussian language, but which were quite similar if not identical to those of the Russian language. Therefore, this reform has never been accepted by Byelorussians living outside of the Soviet bloc.' The Byelorussian version of the foreword goes even further: 'Hetak, pryktadam, u vyniku vykinutaha miakkhaha znaku pamiż miakkimi zyčnymi, ludzí, što prajšį bielaruskiju savieckuju školu, stovy 'śnieh', 'śmiech' niž tolki pišuć, ale j vymaulajuć parasejsku: 'śnieh', 'śmlech'.

There are some general assumptions here that need close examination. Are we really to believe that a governmentally imposed reform can, presumably at a stroke, 'wipe out' the 'indigenous characteristics' of any language? In any case, had any agreement been reached by the end of the 1920s, whether inside the BSSR or outside it, as to what indigenous characteristics of Byelorussian were to be included in the newly emergent literary language, i.e. what its dialect base was to be? What about the acquisition of new words — were they to be in the form of calques or direct borrowings? If Byelorussians living outside of the Soviet bloc do not accept the 1933 reforms, do they accept any of the subsequent reforms, wholly or in part? Whether the answer to the last question is yes or no, we still need to be certain that there is a norm of spelling (in the Cyrillic script) and morphology adhered to by all Byelorussians outside the USSR and Poland; I shall assume that the Latin script recommendations made by A. Losik (1943) are generally accepted whenever the 'łacinka' is used. Finally, is the non-acceptance of Soviet literary Byelorussian motivated by considerations of politics or linguistics? The author of *Fundamental Byelorussian* herself invokes the name of Branislau Tarashkiewich, so we should look to him for answers to some of these questions. In the preface to the fifth edition of his grammar he writes: 'Aštar “Biel. hram. dla škol” sam ciapier bačyć duža vyrazna celuju čarádu jašče.
sp thousands of people in the pr- viste to judge the situation of the Byelorussian alphabet. In his book, the author has developed a system of pronunciation and spelling that is based on the way people actually pronounce words in the Byelorussian language. This system is intended to provide a clear and consistent way of writing Byelorussian words, and it is different from the way that other languages are written, such as Russian and Polish.

The author of the book, N. Taraskievich, presents a clear and concise guide to the pronunciation of Byelorussian words. He explains how to pronounce consonants, vowels, and other elements of the language, and he provides examples of how to use these elements in practice. The book is divided into sections, each of which covers a different aspect of the language, such as vowels, consonants, and word stress.

The book is aimed at learners of Byelorussian, and it is written in a clear and easy-to-understand style. It is an excellent resource for anyone who is learning the language, and it is a valuable reference for teachers and researchers who are interested in the Byelorussian language.
of Taraškievič, but of course no reference is made to the forms now accepted as literary in modern Byelorussian by the vast majority of its speakers. The declension of numerals will presumably be included in the promised second volume, but an instruction on p. 94 is sufficient to tell us what is in store: Напівна січнік імень усях дванадцять 'галинаў' і самех 'нецян'. Numerals genitives from five upwards in -эх are indeed given by Taraškievič (1929: p. 90), but they are now regarded in the BSSR as dialect forms (Blinava & Miaciełskaja, 1969: p. 70) and consequently not met with in standard writing. What is the learner to conclude?

The rules for the use of the prothetic consonant b and vowel i (pp. 97-8) are just one more example of confusion. 'All words beginning with '0' and 'y' (with a few exceptions) take the prothetic 'b.' This presupposes not only an understanding of the word 'prothetic', but also some familiarity with historical linguistics. When seeing the word aсепата for the first time the learner will surely conclude that it begins with 'a', not 'o'. This is a particularly difficult problem of morphonology which needs careful consideration before being presented to any learner of the language.

The 'тацинка' is briefly discussed on pp. 5-7. Throughout the book there is some degree of confusion between a transliteration of Byelorussian cyrillic spelling with letters reflecting sounds in a way immediately intelligible to the English reader, i.e. not using the letters 'j' and 'c' to represent 'y' and 'ts' without prior warning, and the proper latin script spelling of Byelorussian; hence Bahdanovič (p. 51), Bahdanovich (p. 58), Janka Kupala (p. 56), Recyca (p. 128). Vilna on p. 51 contrasts with Vilnia on p. 167. Confusion, and the author's non-acceptance of linguistic and geographical realities will lead the learner to look in vain on a modern map for Minsk (p. 40), Navahradak (p. 66), Horadzien (p. 79). He will be puzzled to learn on p. 79 that Vilnia (alias Vilna, alias Wilno, alias Vilhyn) is in Byelorussia. He will in fact learn very little about modern Byelorussia from this book, except that there are aurochses in the Biełavieža nature reserve (p. 210) and an oil refinery in Rečyca (p. 228). He will absorb the totally erroneous information that the Kriviči were a Byelorussian tribe (p. 58). The descendants of some sections of the Kriviči indeed became Byelorussians, but that is not the same thing. There are three photographs of young people in rustic garb; surely one of them at least could have been replaced by a view of a Byelorussian town?

The English used in Fundamental Byelorussian causes an occasional wince, e.g. 'flee' (p. 58, as a translation of ьпыхача), 'yea' (p. 55), 'sworm' (p. 200), 'bow leged', 'intelect', 'What a devil! (= Іщтого за піхча?)' (all p. 128).

What will the young learner make of a phrase like 'impotence against arbitrary rule'?

It is undoubtedly easier to criticise a textbook than actually to write one. Writing a textbook grammar is probably the most difficult task a linguist can undertake, and recent developments in applied linguistics have only served to highlight these difficulties. Certainly the task needs to be approached with a sense of responsibility towards the language, the people who speak it and the country where it is spoken. Authors of textbook grammars ought therefore to avoid confusing linguistics with politics as far as possible. It must regrettable be said that this confusion, one of which Pashkevich would doubtless accuse Soviet Byelorussian linguists, is the most marked feature of Fundamental Byelorussian. If the book is taken at all seriously as a grammar of modern Byelorussian, it could introduce the 'skodny chaos' of which Taraškievič spoke.

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The aim of this collection of articles is defined in the foreword as follows: 'The authors have sought to identify and analyse all the most important deviations from the norms of the literary language to determine their origin and define their place in the system of the literary language' and 'to give their recommendations on all the most important questions of the culture of the written and oral forms of our (i.e. the Byelorussian) literary language. To this end they have analysed various styles of language — of periodicals, belles-lettres, scientific literature as well as the language of radio, television, the theatre, official speeches and private conversations. The tone of the articles (with the possible exception of Padlužny's) is, however, not as diction as the foreword and the subtitle would suggest or as is so often the case with publications devoted to the raising of the 'culture' of a language, which ignore the realities of live tendencies in a language in favour of traditionally 'correct' forms.

The seven articles, covering the fields of orthoepy, style, morphology, syntax, word-formation and onomastics are: A. I. Padlužny, 'Normy biela­ruskaha litteraturnahy vymaľenža' (pp. 5-32); M. V. Biryła, 'Nacisk' (pp. 33-55); H. U. Aračančka, 'Da pytā­nja ab niektorých sklonavých formach nazožnikau' (pp. 56-83); V. P. Lenčiuhowa, 'Ulasnyja hiehraficznyja nazvy (sklanieńe)' (pp. 84-110); A. J. Michničević, 'Šintaksžina norma i kantamnecja slovazulzczenja' (pp. 111-40); T. V. Kužmičanka, 'Nieka­toryja vypadki užbyvańja sastańnaha imennaha vykaznika' (pp. 141-53); A. A. Kačurš, 'Užbyvańje asbonyč soľ i vyražau' (pp. 154-80).

Perhaps the most interesting and clearly set out article of the seven is Biryła's article on stress. This comprises two main elements: a list of some 600 primary words in which mistaken stress commonly occurs and a detailed analysis of the stress patterns in noun declension and verb conjugation. Four factors are blamed for the fluctuations which occur: the penetration of the literary language by dialect variants, the influence of the Russian stress system, incorrect assimilation of the stress position in borrowed words and the effects of analogy within the Byelorussian literary language itself.

The authors of two other articles, Padlužny and Kačurš, also feel that the influence of Russian is partly responsible for deviations from the norm in the area of standard literary pronunciation and word-formation respectively.

Kačurš, in an article based on material drawn from Byelorussian newspapers published in the years 1966-72, cites a number of instances of contamination of this kind e.g. the use of abłakčenžnie instead of palohka, ahulnažycio instead of supolnaže žycio, tuny instead of miediačavy. While Kačurš' resistance of such contamination of Byelorussian by Russian is firm and consistent, his article as a whole is characterised by a certain arbitrariness in the acceptance or rejection of forms which violate the literary norm (which he bases on the Bielarusk-rusič slošnik, Moscow, 1962 and the Ruska-bielar­uskı slošnik, Moscow, 1953). A number of forms are accepted by him purely on the grounds that they have gained wide currency, while others are rejected despite this; the spelling расяер (for расяер) is rejected despite the fact that this is the form in which it appears in the Bielarusk-rusič slošnik, while on the other hand крьыла is preferred to крьыла on the ground that it is regularly passed.