ularly valuable when so many of Pušča's more interesting poems are otherwise unavailable.

Paeta z Božaj łaski is a popular book, but, as the first substantial study of Pušča, an important one. It

is to be hoped that the author will have more copies printed, and that it will serve to introduce an unjustly neglected poet to a wider audience.

Arnold McMillin

Kalešnik, U. *Vietrazi Adysieja. Uładzimir Žyłka i ramantyčnaja tradycija ŭ biełaruskaj paezii*. 'Mastackaja litaratura', Minsk, 1977. 328 pages. Illustrations.

The case of Uładzimir Žyłka (1900-1933) is a strange and sad one even in the frequently bizarre context of Byelorussian literature of the twenties and thirties. A fervent Communist and staunch patriot all his life, he began as a poet in Western Byelorussia, lived for a while in Prague (1923-26) and, having voluntarily moved to Soviet Byelorussia, fell as one of the first victims to Stalin's Purges. As a poet, Žyłka may, like Čarot, be associated with Harun in the spirit and free form of many of his lyrics, but whereas Čarot vehemently proclaimed futuristic destruction in his hymn to the revolutionary new age *Bosyja na vohniščach* (1921), Žyłka replied to the frenzied *burapienist* with relatively measured tones (though he too felt 'drunk on motion') in *Ujaŭleńnie* (1922), an eloquent poetic description of the various stages in a specifically Byelorussian national revolution, with the future seen as the product of 'immense distances and enormous treasures' rather than universal nihilism. Always a romantic, Žyłka wrote elevated nature poems and unusual formally adventurous lyrics on love and mortality, somewhat in the folkloristic tradition of late Bahdanovič. In the Soviet Union he was soon dubbed with the epithet 'bourgeois aesthete', and expelled from the initially radical organization 'Maładniak' in 1928. He joined 'Uzvyšša' in the following year, and, having figured extensively in Andrej Aleksandrovič's notorious denunciatory poem *Cieni na soncy* (1928-30) was in 1930 the first of many 'Uzvyšša' members to be arrested by the OGPU. Žyłka's 'odyssey' ended with death in Siberia in 1933, after which appeared his verse *Testament* (printed 1942), a strongly nationalistic declaration of Byelorussian patriotism and of the, in the circumstances remarkable, politic-

al loyalty which had remained with him throughout earlier 'slings and arrows of outrageous fortune'.

In the introduction to his attractively produced new monograph Uładzimir Kalešnik, author of several books on West Byelorussian literature including a now superseded study of Maksim Tank (*Paezija zmahańnia: Maksim Tank i zachodniebielaruskaja litaratura*, Minsk, 1959) criticizes those Western commentators who have portrayed Žyłka as a victim of the Party he so faithfully supported. It is, however, difficult to see this loyal Communist as other than a martyr in the light of hard facts which this rather ill-documented book (no bibliography, inadequate annotation) does little or nothing to dispel. Rehabilitated relatively late, in 1961, Žyłka had until 1970 only twenty-nine poems published in Soviet Byelorussia. Even *Vieršy*, published by Kalešnik in 1970 and still the only Soviet collection of his works, omits several major poems including the greater part of *Ujaŭleńnie* and all of *Testament*, whereas the émigré edition *Tvory* (New York, 1955) embraces all Žyłka's surviving original poems, and includes a substantial commentary by Anthony Adamovich. It would seem that Kalešnik 'doth protest too much' in his comments on the work of 'ideological enemies' (p. 6).

Nonetheless *Vietrazi Adysieja* augments Adamovich in several details, and may be given a very cautious welcome for drawing some attention to a seriously neglected modern Byelorussian poet, though one regrets the strong ideological special pleading and some curious ideas about 'progressive' and 'reactionary' romanticism (already familiar from Kalešnik's earlier work). The most serious sins, however, are those of omission: Western students of Žyłka's work can use this new book

in conjunction with Adamovich's study, but Soviet readers will gain a decidedly one-sided picture of the poet and his times, particularly since *Vietrazi Adysieja* (328 pages; 2000 copies) is far more likely to be read than *Vieršy* (136 pages; 2000 copies),

long since unavailable. In the circumstances it may be felt that a scholarly edition of Žyłka's work would have been a more worthwhile project.

Arnold McMillin

Majsiejenka, A. F. *Tvorčasć Michasia Zareckaha: Stanaŭleńnie talentu. 'Vyšejšaja škola'*, Minsk, 1978. 152 pages. Bibliography.

Anatol Majsiejenka begins his long overdue study of Michaś Zarecki (pseudonym of Michaił Kasiankoŭ, 1901-41) by correctly noting that although he was one of the most talented of early Soviet Byelorussian prose writers he has for a long time been deliberately neglected, indeed 'erased from the history of literature' (p. 3). It is a pity that this frankness is not maintained throughout what is otherwise a serious attempt to revive interest in Zarecki, for the author fails to mention several of his significant works, thus presenting an incomplete picture of a most colourful and varied figure. For example, in the discussion of the sketches on collectivization of 1930, *Listy da znajomaha* and *Viasna 1930 hoda*, and of the rather dull novel *Viaźmo* (1932) which to some extent derived from them, Majsiejenka specifically contrasts Zarecki with those writers who depicted collectivization in terms of black and white (pp. 74-75), at the same time completely failing to mention his far more critical *Padarožža na novuju ziamlu* of 1929, a book which brought him accusations of 'deviationist' and 'kulak' tendencies, and was partly the cause of his expulsion from the Communist Party later that year.

The other reason for Zarecki's temporary disgrace (he was not arrested as an 'enemy of the people' until 1936) was a nationalistic novel somewhat in the spirit of Vaclaŭ Łastoŭski, *Kryvičy* (1929-31), of which only the first and last parts were published, although the important central section was quite well known in manuscript and deemed by the contemporary critic Orest Kanakocin 'the "highest achievement" of Byelorussian National Democracy in Literature' (see Anthony Adamovich, *Opposition to Sovietization in Belorussian Literature*

(1917-1957), Munich, 1958, p. 118). In his first, and in many ways best, major novel *Ścieżki-darožki* (1927), a lively account of the Revolution and Civil War, Zarecki had consistently made his 'villains' more lifelike and interesting than their rather boring 'positive' Communist counterparts, often allowing them to utter anti-Soviet sentiments without contradiction or comment. In *Kryvičy*, however, the expression of nationalist feelings is much more direct, with Byelorussianization, for instance, dismissed as a 'sly trick' (see Adamovich, *op cit.*, p. 19). None of this emerges clearly from Majsiejenka who, whilst according *Kryvičy* 'significance', declines to discuss its literary merits on the grounds that it is unfinished, merely observing that to judge by the published parts it did not justify the attacks made on it by contemporary critics (p. 73). Even this, however, is an improvement on the previous practice of passing the novel over in complete silence or dismissing it, as does Aleś Adamovič (*Bietaruski roman*, Minsk, 1961, p. 142), as one of Zarecki's '*idejna-tvorčyja zryvy*'. *Kryvičy* is not included in the Bibliography of works by and about Zarecki (pp. 149-51) which, though welcome in itself, is in fact marred by several omissions in both categories. For instance, no works by Kavalenka are cited although he is mentioned in the Introduction as one of the scholars who have written about Zarecki recently.

Tvorčasć Michasia Zareckaha is a slight and imperfect book, published in an edition of only 800 copies, but it reflects a genuine attempt to redress some of the injustice which this novelist has suffered from critics and publishers in the past. A great deal remains to be done before all Byelorussia's major 20th-century writers