

# **Francis Skaryna Belarusian Library and Museum**

## **Finding Aid**

### **PAPERS OF THE RADA OF THE BELARUSIAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC**

#### **Series 3**

#### **Subseries 1**

**Corporate Creator:** Rada of the Belarusian Democratic Republic.

**Dates:** ca. 1918-2006

**Quantity:** 6.5 (approx.) ln.ft.

**Language:** Belarusian, English, French, German, Polish, Russian.

#### **PROVENANCE**

Collection acquired from Mr Alexander Łaszuk circa 1997 and Dr Raisa Žuk-Hryškievič in 2006.

#### **PROCESSING**

Collection was processed in 2023 by Ihar Łabacevič.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION**

Papers of the Council (ff. Rada BNR) of the Belarusian Democratic Republic in exile consist of correspondence, photographs, periodical clippings, posters, financial documents, and broadsides.

#### **HISTORICAL NOTES**

##### **The Council (Rada BNR) of the Belarusian Democratic Republic**

The Council of the Belarusian Democratic Republic (ff. The Rada) was founded as an executive body of the First All-Belarusian Congress, held in Minsk in December 1917. Over 1800 participants from different regions of Belarus including representatives of Belarusian national organisations, regional representatives, main Christian denominations, and

Belarusian Jewish political parties took part. The work of the Congress was violently interrupted by the Bolsheviks.

After the retreat of the Bolsheviks from Minsk, the Rada declared itself the supreme executive authority in Belarus. Following the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk signed by the Bolsheviks and the Germans the Rada declared independent Belarusian Democratic Republic. Despite Germany's refusal to give official recognition of Belarusian independence, the Rada managed to start organising its governing bodies in different parts of the country as well as working on establishing a national Belarusian army and a national education system.

The Rada established official diplomatic contacts with several states including Finland, the Ukrainian People's Republic, Czechoslovakia, the Baltic States, Turkey and others.

With the approach of Bolshevik armies to Minsk the Rada was forced to relocate to Vilnia (Wilno, Vilnius), then to Hrodna and eventually, upon coordination with the Republic of Lithuania, to Kaunas.

Since 1919, the Rada BNR has been in exile where it has preserved its existence among the Belarusian diaspora as an advocacy group promoting support of Belarusian independence and democracy in Belarus among Western policymakers.

The Rada was intended to be a provisional parliament which would perform its functions till a constitutional convention of Belarus was held.

Today the Rada sees itself as a bearer of the symbolic mandate and as a guarantor of the independence of Belarus. The goal of the Rada is to transfer its mandate to a democratically elected Parliament of Belarus under the condition that no threat to the independence of Belarus should be present.

The Rada is led by the President of the Rada BNR (Старшыня Рады БНР) and a Presidium (Executive council) consisting of 14 members. Presently it is headed by Mme Ivonka Survilla who resides in Ottawa, Canada.

The Rada includes several Secretariates as working groups or individual secretaries responsible for specific areas, including Secretariates for External Affairs, for Internal Affairs, for Information, for Education.

The activity of the Rada BNR is regulated by the Provisional Constitution of the Belarusian People's Republic and the Statute of the Rada BNR.

As of 2022, the Rada BNR is the oldest existing government in exile.

## **BIOGRAPHIES OF THE PRINCIPAL DONORS OF THE COLLECTION**

### **Mr Alaksandar Laszuk (Аляксандар Лашук)**

Mr Alaksandar Łaszuk was born on November 11, 1909 in village Pahrabišča (today's Vilejka district of the Minsk region, Belarus). He was one of the founders of the Association of Belarusians in Great Britain, acted as the Association's Secretary, Treasurer and Vice President. He also led the British Sector of the Rada BNR. He died in 1997 and buried in St. Pancras cemetery in North London. Materials donated by him form 4 boxes (2 lin. ft.) of this collection.

## **Dr Raisa Zuk-Hryskievič.**

Raisa Zuk-Hryskievič (née Žukoŭskaja) was born on October 22, 1919 in Pruzhany, Belarus. There she completed her secondary education and in 1938 she began her studies at the Belarusian gymnasium at Vilnia (Vilnius). After a reunification of the Western and Eastern parts of Belarus and the Soviet occupation of 1939, she worked as a teacher of Belarusian language in her native Pružany and a nearby village Smalanica. In 1942 the Nazis sent her to Germany as a forced labourer.

After the war she was an active member of Belarusian girl scouts organisations in Watenstedt Displaced Persons camp (British Zone), West Germany. She studied dentistry in Marburg, Germany. After moving to Canada, she received Canadian dentistry diploma in 1954 and worked as a dentist until her retirement in 1990. In 1953, she married the then Vice-President of the Rada of the Belarusian Democratic Republic in exile Dr. Vincent (Vincuk) Žuk-Hryskievič (1903-1989), a professor of the University of Toronto.

In Canada she became an active member of the Belarusian Canadian Alliance. She was the head of the Coordination committee of Belarusians in Canada and its newsletter “Kamunikat”, [The News], the head of the Belarusian Canadian Women's Association, a secretary and treasurer of the Belarusian Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada; she was a member of the International Association for Belarusian studies and Canadian Relief Fund For Chernobyl Victims in Belarus. She is an author of several books about Belarusian history, literature, and language.

She passed away on April 2, 2009 and buried at the Belarusian cemetery in New Brunswick, NJ, USA alongside her husband.

## **CITE AS**

**Francis Skaryna Belarusian Library and Museum Archives, Papers of the Rada BNR.**

## **CORPORATE NAME INDEX**

Association of Belarusians in Great Britain

<http://viaf.org/viaf/304254322>

[Rada Belaruskaj Narodnaj Respubliki](#)

<http://viaf.org/viaf/152148207868300341775>

- **Variants**

- BNR
- BDR
- Belarusan Democratic Republic
- Belarusian Democratic Republic
- Belorussian Democratic Republic
- Belorussian National Republic

- Belarusan National Republic
- Bielaruskaja Narodnaja Respublika

Susvietnaje Abjednannie Bielaruskaj Emihracyjji

International Federation of Free Journalists <http://viaf.org/viaf/239189943>

## SUBJECT TERMS INDEX

Belarusian

[Belarusian language](#)

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Belarusians–Australia–History

Belarusians–Belgium–History

Belarusians–Canada–History

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## PERSONAL NAMES INDEX

Abramčyk, Mikoła, 1903-1970, <http://viaf.org/viaf/311201823>

Arsen'nieva, Natalla, 1903-1997, <http://viaf.org/viaf/45143030>

Astroŭski, Viktar, 1912-1975, <http://viaf.org/viaf/86146936603113780372>

Bortnik, Uładzimir, 1910-1988

Dziamidaŭ, Mikałaj, 1888-1967

Henijuš, Larysa, 1910-1983, <http://viaf.org/viaf/52497877>

Kalodka, Alaksandar, 1911-1985

Kaloša, Kastuś, 1924-2004

Kažanievič, Chviedar, 1926-2007

Łašuk, Alaksandar, 1909-1997

Malecki, Jazep, 1906-1982, <http://viaf.org/viaf/1242145857144422922989>

Nadsan, Alaksandar, 1926-2015, <http://viaf.org/viaf/81418618>

Picarda, Guy, 1931-2007, <http://viaf.org/viaf/161721579>

Rydleŭski, Lavon, 1903-1953, <http://viaf.org/viaf/587154380918830290367>

Sażyč, Jazep, 1917-2007, <http://viaf.org/viaf/316145857894123020808>

Siankievič, Viktar (Jazep Barejka), 1926-2017

Sipovič, Česlaŭ, 1914-1981, <http://viaf.org/viaf/178994477>

Surviła, Ivonka, 1936-, <http://viaf.org/viaf/173471332>

Šukielojć, Anton, 1915-2017, <http://viaf.org/viaf/6744154260706924480007>

Šyła, Mikola, 1888-1948

Varońka, Jazep, 1891-1952 <http://viaf.org/viaf/2707154260513124480009>

Zaprudnik, Janka, 1926-2022, <http://viaf.org/viaf/14867310>

Žuk-Hryškievič, Raisa, 1919-2009, <http://viaf.org/viaf/105587864>

Žuk-Hryškievič, Vincent, 1903-1989, <http://viaf.org/viaf/104100894>

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

### Box 1:

**Folder 1:** Rada BNR British Sector: Financial documentation and Reports, 1948-1953.

**Folder 2:** Rada BNR British Sector: Financial documentation and Reports, 1952-1960.

**Folder 3:** Rada BNR British Sector notebooks with spreadsheets and contributions receipts, 1952-1960.

**Folder 4:** Rada BNR British Sector: Mail Registers, 1949-1965.

**Folder 5:** Rada BNR British Sector: Mail Membership Cards (Knižačka Biełaruskaha Emihranta).

### Box 2:

**Folder 1:** Rada BNR British Sector: Financial Correspondence, 1948-1956

**Folder 2:** Rada BNR British Sector: Financial Correspondence, 1951-1956

**Folder 3:** Rada BNR British Sector: Financial Correspondence, 1952-1960

**Folder 4:** Rada BNR British Sector: Financial Correspondence: Manchester and Cambridge Branches, 1948-1956

**Folder 5:** Rada BNR British Sector: Financial Correspondence, 1960-1961

*Note:* This box also contains 26 books of carbon copies of donation receipts to the Rada's Financial Secretariate and two books of membership fees for the Rada BNR British Sector for 1949-1970 and 1958-1984. These documents are not placed in individual folders.

### Box 3:

**Folder 1:** Rada BNR, British Sector: Correspondence, copies of international treaties pertaining to Belarus, Rada's Memoranda, Statutes, 1942-1979.

**Folder 2:** Rada BNR, British Sector: Correspondence, 1948-1959.

**Folder 3:** Rada BNR, British Sector: Correspondence, 1960-1969.

**Folder 4:** Rada BNR, British Sector: Correspondence, Statutes, various documents pertaining to the activities of the Rada, 1970-1974.

**Folder 5:** Rada BNR letterheads, 1920s-1980s.

**Folder 6:** Rada BNR, British Sector: Correspondence, 1971-1979.

**Folder 7:** Rada BNR: official publications, 1973-1974, articles by Viktor Astroŭski related to general Belarusian history and the Rada's affairs.

### Box 4:

**Folder 1:** Rada BNR, British Sector: Bradford Division, Financial Correspondence, 1952-1965.

**Folder 2:** Rada BNR, British Sector: Financial Correspondence, 1962-1966. Notebook with demographical information of the British Sector members, lists of Rada BNR members in various countries.

**Folder 3:** Rada BNR, British Sector: minutes, correspondence, financial documents, activities report.

**Folder 4:** Rada BNR: Financial Correspondence, British Sector Treasurer's, and Secretary's correspondence, 1952-1995.

**Folder 5:** Rada BNR, British sector: Correspondence (M. Nikon, A. Kachanoŭski, V. Žuk, U. Šymaniec et al.), 1947-1951.

#### **Box 5:**

**Folder 1:** Press releases, bulletins, manifestos of the Rada BNR, newsletter “БЭЭНЭРАВЕЦ” (Nr. 1, 1952), brochures “A što dalej” by Mikola Šyła, “BNR ci BSSR” by V. Žuk and “I accuse the Kremlin...” by Mikola Abramčyk, paper clippings, 1948-1969.

**Folder 2:** Press releases, script of the Presidential address to the 13<sup>th</sup> Assembly of Belarusians in North America, various editions of the Statute of the Rada BNR, book “25-ha Sakavika” by Vincent Žuk-Hryškievič, maps of the BNR, 1971-1980.

**Folder 3:** Materials of the “Conference of Free Byelorussians, Balts and Ukrainians” (provenance: Mr Paul Pashkievich): resolution, memoranda, 1978.

**Folder 4:** President Mikola Abramčyk's death, his testament, various correspondence from Bishop Sipovič, Vincent and Raisa Žuk-Hryškievič, et al. related to the Rada's archives, 1969-1971.

**Folder 5:** Official Rada BNR publications: newsletters (“Biuletieŭ Rady BNR” and “Kamunikat”), 1957-1979.

**Folder 6:** Publications, maps and photographs reflecting early Rada's history, 1918-1919.

**Folder 7:** Publications, correspondence, newsletters, paper clippings related to the activities of the World Union of the Belarusian Emigration (Сусьветнае Аб'яднаньне Беларускае Эміграцыі) and the International Federation of Free Journalists, 1948-1950.

**Folder 8:** Correspondence, speeches, interviews, memoir fragments of the Rada's President Mme Ivonka (Joanne) Surviła, 2000s.

#### **Box 6:**

**Folder 1:** The 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> Sessions of the Rada BNR, Protocols and Resolutions, 1960-1971.

**Folder 2:** The 12<sup>th</sup> Session of the Rada BNR, Protocols and Resolutions, 1973.

**Folder 3:** The 13<sup>th</sup> Session of the Rada BNR, Protocols and Resolutions, 1974.

**Folder 4:** The 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the Rada BNR, Protocols and Resolutions, 1976.

**Folder 5:** The 15<sup>th</sup> Session of the Rada BNR, Protocols and Resolutions, 1978.

**Folder 6:** The 16<sup>th</sup> Session of the Rada BNR, Protocols and Resolutions, 1979.

**Folder 7:** The 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Sessions of the Rada BNR, Protocols and Resolutions, 1982-1988.

**Folder 8:** Dr R. Žuk-Hryškievič's correspondence with K. Akula, A. Kalodka, Fr. A. Nadson, P. Asipovic, J. Zaprudnik, Pres. Abramčyk, et. al., 1961-1996.

#### **Box 7:**

**Folder 1:** Addresses, speeches, correspondence of the Rada's President V. Žuk-Hryškievič, 1969-1988.

**Folder 2:** Minutes of the Rada's Executive Council's (Presidium) meetings, 1969 – 1982.

**Folder 3:** Materials of the Canadian sector of the Rada, 1948-1951.

**Folder 4:** Materials of the Canadian sector of the Rada, 1961-1979.

**Folder 5:** Materials related to the Postal service of the BNR, Belarusian postal service in diaspora (1978), correspondence of the Rada's President V. Žuk-Hryškievič with Guy Picarda, Č. Budzka, et. al. pertaining to the history of Belarusian postal stamps.

**Folder 6:** Kreceŭski Foundation materials: Certificate of incorporation, agreement with the Rada, official correspondence, 1960-1979.

**Folder 7:** Mobilisation order by the Belarusian Military commandant of Horadnia district Lt Col M. Dziamidaŭ, 1919.

**Folder 8:** V. Zacharka's documents: Postcard addressed to Larysa Henijuš, his death certificate, funeral director's bills, funeral photographs. (Donated by J. Henijuš in 1980)

**Folder 9:** Organisational committee of the BNR League, 1968-1977.

**Folder 10:** Rada's material pertaining to the veterans' affairs, 1969-1979.

**Folder 11:** Financial documents of the Presidential Secretariate, 1973-1982.

**Folder 12:** Proposals for structural reorganisation of the Rada, 1968-1971.

#### **Box 8**

**Folder 1:** Incoming correspondence of the President of Rada, 1970.

**Folder 2:** Outgoing correspondence of the President of Rada, 1970.

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#### **Box 9**

**Folder 1:** Incoming and outgoing correspondence of the President of Rada, 1974.

**Folder 2:** Incoming and outgoing correspondence of the President of Rada, 1975.

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**Folder 4:** Incoming and outgoing correspondence of the President of Rada, 1977.

**Folder 5:** Incoming and outgoing correspondence of the President of Rada, 1978.

**Folder 6:** Incoming and outgoing external correspondence of the President of Rada, 1971-1974.

#### **Box 10**

**Folder 1:** Incoming correspondence of the President of Rada, 1979-1980.

**Folder 2:** Outgoing correspondence of the President of Rada, 1979-1980.

**Folder 3:** Incoming and outgoing correspondence of the President of Rada, 1981-1982.

**Folder 4:** Copies of materials from the British Foreign Office related to the BNR, 1918-1921. Col. N.T. Belaiew's lecture "Russia, Lithuania and Poland", 1918.

**Box 11** (A3 size): Copies of documents from the Archives of British Foreign Office, London on Political relations between Great Britain and Belarus (originals kept at the Public Records Office, Chancery Lane, London WC1), 1918-1921.