

Issue 11 of 2015 presents a Belarusian translation of a novel by **Sergiusz Piasecki** “Night Gods’ Equals”. The piece was written and published in the year that followed the author’s release from prison (1938) and tells a story of the activities of Polish spies and local Belarusian smugglers in 1923 along the Belarusian section of Polish-Soviet border. However the story is centered around Minsk of the time with its prominent landmarks (the governor’s garden, “Paris” hotel) and the suburbs of the time (Sierabranka, Miadźvieżyna, Jarkava, Staroje Siało). The peripheral scenes of action of the novel are Babrujsk, Rakaŭ, Vyazma, Lahojsk and other towns.

“Night Gods’ Equals” is a brilliant example of action spy novel with its integral features: insidiousness, love and sex (including such types of sexual relief as masturbation, zoophilia and lesbian lovemaking), individual and collective drug use (mostly cocaine), shooting with all sorts of firearms and unexpected tragic ending.

As a kind of afterword for the novel a study by **Uladzimir Lachouški** and **Kanstancin Naščyniec** “Contraband in BSSR in 1920s — 1930s: social and economic aspects” is published. The authors conclude that the spread of smuggling across the Belarusian section of Polish-Soviet border in 1920 s — 1930s was caused by the geopolitical situation of the time and the profound economic crisis that the new Soviet state was suffering in its first years of existence. Smugglers were taking gold and hard currencies out of the country and contributed to the rise of crime in border areas of BSSR. On the other hand, the widespread smuggling during the period alleviated to some extent the shortages of consumer goods caused by Soviet plan-based economy. The history of contraband during that period can be divided into several stages. During the first stage of 1920—1921 the movement of goods and smugglers across Belarusian territory was largely unrestrained. During the second stage of 1922—1927 Soviet authorities were striving to overcome contraband by tightening border and customs controls, and via special economic measures such as better supply of border regions with consumer goods through state-owned and cooperative outlets. The third stage of 1927—1930s was characterized by a significant increase in border and customs control on the part of Soviet authorities which led to a marked decrease in the amount of contraband. At that time Soviet enforcers started to take severe repressive measures against smugglers and their families.