

CARPATHO~RUSYN AMERICAN®

A Newsletter on Carpatho-Rusyn Ethnic Heritage



GUEST EDITORIAL

In connection with the *Carpatho-Rusyn American's* "Year of the Lemko," editor John Haluska wrote a provocative editorial in our last issue (Winter, 1987), urging Rusyn Americans not to abandon their heritage out of ignorance, laziness, or neglect. "If our Rusyn heritage is worthy of being saved," he said, "it can only be saved by you." As individuals, and especially as a group, we ourselves are clearly responsible for guarding, nurturing, and promoting our ethnic culture. Does this mean that we are expected to become curators of a museum-like culture which no longer exists except in faded photographs and yellowed embroideries and which is nourished only by nostalgia for some golden, irretrievable past? Hardly. The case around which editor Haluska builds his argument is that of the Lemko Rusyns of Poland.

After forced displacement from their home villages forty years ago, the Lemko Rusyns of Poland have not only survived decades of pressure either to Polishize or Ukrainianize, but in fact are now experiencing an awakening. A young generation of Rusyns in Poland has become strongly committed to being Lemkos. One of their number, Jaroslav Hunka, contributed an article to our last issue describing his own journey along the road toward ethnic self-discovery as a Lemko Rusyn in Poland, and tracing the struggle of his people to preserve their identity in the face of overwhelming odds. The success of their struggle not only should set a standard for Rusyn Americans, it ought to and can be supported by us as well.

What Hunka's article actually outlines is in some ways a traditional process of nation-building observed mainly in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when a number of Slavic groups attempted to carve out for themselves distinct national identities. Among the Lemko Rusyns of Poland, we are presently observing renewed efforts to nurture precisely those elements of nation-building that were typical of other Slavic groups earlier — elements which lead to a people's awareness that they have a common language and material culture, and that they are distinct from other national groups. A recorded history and tradition, the codification of dialects into a single standard literary language, and a body of literature in the standard language are all crucial items toward melding a higher unified consciousness necessary for nation-building.

At the present time, representatives of the Lemko Rusyns in Poland are engaged in two concrete projects which characterize the nation-building process: the preparation of a dictionary for a standard Lemko-Rusyn language, and the compilation of an anthology of Lemko-Rusyn poetry and prose. There is not the first attempt to standardize a Rusyn language, although for a number of reasons most previous attempts, with one exception, have not endured. That one exception is among the Rusyns in the Vojvodina region of Yugoslavia. They did succeed and now enjoy schooling, newspapers, radio and television in their officially recognized Vojvodinian Rusyn language. Following in their footsteps and spirit, the Lemko Rusyns may indeed continue their efforts with a healthy optimism.

The Lemko dictionary project recently has come under the sponsorship of the Department of Slavic Languages at Jagellonian University in Cracow. Headed by the depart-

ment's chair and guided by the Lemko poet Olena Duc, five research scholars are working on the project, employing not only written literature as a primary source, but also gathering linguistic information in those Carpathian villages where Lemkos have returned and where the dialects are presumably less affected by the dominant language of the country — Polish. In conjunction with her work, Ms. Duc will travel to Yugoslavia to observe how the Vojvodinian Rusyns successfully standardized and now employ in everyday situations their literary language. In addition, she is working on a third edition of the English-Rusyn phrasebook, *Let's Speak Rusyn*, which will employ the new Lemko-Rusyn standard.

The other important project, the anthology of Lemko-Rusyn literature, is in the capable hands of poet and playwright Petro Trochanovskij. Now in its latter stages, this project is the first attempt ever to compile and publish Rusyn literature representing Lemko Rusyns from both north and south of the Carpathian Mountains. Here it is important to remember that these language and literature projects have a significance not only for the Lemko Rusyns of Poland. Lemko Rusyns both in Poland and in the Prešov Region in today's eastern Slovakia share a common language and culture, a fact not respected by present political and state boundaries.

Among future projects that could be undertaken is the translation of the world's major works of literature into the new Lemko-Rusyn standard. Just as original prose and poetry and a dictionary contribute dignity to the speakers of a language and pride in their nationality, literary texts like the Bible in the vernacular have functioned in the same way. Here we might also point to the recent appearance (1985) of a translation of the Gospels into Vojvodinian Rusyn and their role in enhancing the prestige of the official language used by Rusyns of Yugoslavia.

To return to our original thoughts, we are obviously not dealing with a museum piece when we strive to study, preserve, and promote our Rusyn heritage. We are faced with a living culture, struggling to survive, striving to express itself, proud to be itself. The needs of Rusyns and their culture in the homeland go far beyond our own abundant donations of nostalgia. It is time for us to awaken to the concerns of our Rusyn brothers and sisters at present and to keep in mind the future evolution of the culture.

The linguistic and literary projects outlined here are crucial to the preservation of Rusyn culture, and in order for them to succeed they must be supported by us not only intellectually and emotionally, but also financially. The Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center does its best to promote such cultural efforts and at present is establishing a Rusyn Cultural Fund, income from which will be employed specifically for the support of the projects outlined here. Tax-deductible donations of \$50.00 or more will be gratefully received. Please send your checks to the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, 355 Delano Place, Fairview, New Jersey 07022. Also please be sure to indicate on your check that it is intended for the Rusyn Cultural Fund.

In considering the donation you are about to give, keep in mind the words of the *C-RA* editor, John Haluska: "If the Lemko Rusyns, the ordinary ones, can claim their place in Poland, surely we must help them, and by doing so, we will do no less than help ourselves."

Patricia A. Krafcik

BOHDAN IHOR ANTONYČ (1909-1937)

Bohdan Ihor Antonyč, the greatest and the best known Lemko poet, was born in the very heart of the Lemko Region. Although he was separated early from his native mountains, he remained always closely identified with the land of his childhood. This is evident in a most direct way in his poems about the Lemko Region, but also, indirectly, in his thought, his expression, and in his way of looking at the world.

Among the mountains "where heaven is near," Antonyč learned to know and to love "the green gospel of nature," which remained an inspiration until the end of his life. This enchanted fairytale land shaped his young imagination and gave birth to pantheistic reflections. Although all of Antonyč's poems published so far were written in literary Ukrainian, we know that he started to write early and that many of his poems were written in his native Lemko-Rusyn language.

Antonyč was born on October 5, 1909, in the Lemko Region village of Nowica near Gorlice, as the only son of the local parish priest. The idyllic period of his childhood was interrupted twice because his parents were forced to flee from their native village: first, in 1914 to Vienna, as a result of World War I's eastern front approaching the area; then, in 1919, to Slovakia, in connection with repressions resulting from political activities of the poet's uncle. Antonyč's biographers point out the influence of his childhood nurse and later governess on the development of his unique poetic talent. I would suggest an even greater role was played by the stark beauty of the mountain scenery interacting with the inborn sensitivity of the boy.

It was during Antonyč's university years in L'viv that we first hear of his poetry, which included the appearance of *Pryvitannja žyttja* (Greetings of Life, 1931). At the same time, he was working on a volume of religious lyric poems, "Velyka harmonija" (The Great Harmony), which was never published. Just after graduation with a Master's degree in 1933, another volume of his more mature poetry appeared, *Try persteni* (Three Rings, 1934), which enjoyed exceptional popularity.

After completing his university studies, Antonyč remained in the urban environment of L'viv (which his writings often scorn), working on three more collections of poems, only one of which, *Knyha Leva* (The Book of Lev, 1936) appeared during his lifetime, followed posthumously by *Zelena evangelija* (The Green Gospel, 1938) and *Rotaciji* (Rotations, 1938). He was also working on a dramatic opera, *Dovbuš* and a novel, *Na tomu berezi* (On this Shore), but these were unfortunately never completed. When he died on July 6, 1937, he was at the height of his poetic powers.

As a literary phenomenon, Antonyč is mainly a creation of his native land, which under its cover of poverty has always contained great spiritual wealth and has given birth to individuals of exceptional talent. These individuals, full of inner contradictions both solitary and proud, can only be understood in the context of deep ties to the native soil. Having once fallen under the spell of the mountains, having drunk of their heady fragrance, having been burned by the mountain sun, Antonyč would forever remain "the poet of nature and the sun," the boy "holding the sun in his hand," in love with life and spring and creating poetry pregnant with hot, burning emotions. The passionate enjoyment of life mixed with a certain pagan quality — the "divinization" of nature and the sun, the pantheistic freedom of his thought — are character-



istic of the people of the mountains, who live simple lives "near to the sun" that accord with nature's own rhythm.

There came a time when the boy, "having sold his life to the sun for a hundred ducats of madness," went into the world in search of his fate. But he took with him a longing for his homeland. So he began to paint with words images of that wonderful, enchanted country and to create his "green gospel" in which, as in childhood, one can experience again the primeval unity of the world — the great peace and the wisdom of nature.

I understand you, plants and animals
I hear the noise of comets and the growth of grass
Antonyč is a curly sad animal too.

Never could the poet separate himself from these vast green spaces warmed by the sun. Here we find the source of his inspiration. His imagination, the musical and plastic qualities of his poetry as well as their spatial depth, were all born during hot Lemko nights to the sound of gypsy bands and in an atmosphere of strange tales of bandits, magic bullets, and mysterious herbs. On such nights, the past and the present, fantasy and truth, merged into one vibrant reality, and the moonlight music carried the soul away from earth far, far into space.

In that poor Lemko land, Antonyč found his greatest treasure. In his poetry, we can often sense his fear of losing this treasure, of forgetting his strong connection with nature. But he never did. He retained a close organic bond with the world of nature until the end of his short life. He preserved the original solitary character of the mountain highlander. And to those who tried to draw him into political activities in urban L'viv and to persuade him to write about "ideological" issues, he responded: "I want and I have the courage to go it alone and be myself. I am not a player in anyone's group."

Although the young, rich flame of the poet's life went out half a century ago, when we read his poetry, it seems that his life still continues in the green expanse of Carpathian forests and meadows.

Olena Duc
Uście Gorlickie, Poland

THE LEMKOS TODAY — A RESPONSE

The appearance in 1985 of Jaroslav Hunka's essay, "Lemkos Today," prompted extensive discussion within Poland among those interested in the Lemko question. A local Ukrainian cultural activist Volodymyr Mokryj, assistant professor at the University of Cracow, decided to organize a group of Lemkos who would respond with viewpoints that differ from those of Hunka. These responses appeared in the summer of 1986 in a booklet published as part of a series by the Student Circle of Guides to the Beskyd Mountains. Four of the five responses from that booklet together with an introductory note by the editor of the Polish series is published here for the first time in English translation.

Like the editor of the Polish series, we find it difficult to agree with most of the statements which follow (especially in responses 2,3, and 4), but we publish them in keeping with the policy of the Carpatho-Rusyn American to make available all sides of a given issue.

For certain passages or phrases, we have added explanatory notes in brackets. The parentheses include material from the original text. — Editor

Introduction

In keeping with our announcement over a year ago, we present here polemical responses to Jaroslav Hunka's essay, which we published under the title "Lemkos Today." The responses that follow differ among themselves in many respects and present various viewpoints, although all are opposed to Hunka's understanding of the Lemko question. We are publishing these responses anonymously, as stipulated by the authors, all of whom are Lemkos of different generations.

We were forced to shorten some of the statements, but in doing so we tried not to disturb the authors' train of thought. On the other hand, we did not introduce any corrections into the texts. Nor shall we express our own views, although it is admittedly difficult for us to accept many of the statements presented here (and for that matter in Hunka's text as well), especially those pertaining to the historical past. Nonetheless, our intention is to present various viewpoints, attitudes, and feelings, and to allow voices of differing orientations to have their say with equal respect for all of them. Our concern is not the dispute over the identity of Lemkos — only Lemkos themselves can decide this. The one thing which we [as Poles] can and should do, however, is to follow the development of the Lemko question carefully and respectfully.

Considering the substantial passage of time since the publication of Hunka's essay, let us recall its principal theses to help us understand better the polemical responses which follow:

(1) Lemkos are not a part of the Ukrainian nationality, but a separate "fourth East Slavic nationality."

(2) Lemkos are descended from the early medieval White Croats who inhabited the areas along the Upper Vistula River, and after partial migration to the Balkans, were pushed into the mountains of the present-day Lemko Region.

(3) The authorities of the Ukrainian Socio-Cultural Society (USKT), whose aim is the "Ukrainianization" of Lemkos, are fighting against Lemko culture. Ukrainianization is completely unattractive to young Lemkos.

Publishing Committee of the
Student Circle of Guides to the Beskyd Mountains

Response 1

It is necessary to analyze Hunka's views thoroughly by the historical method. Let us consider the nineteenth and twentieth centuries up to the outbreak of World War II. In this period, Lemkos felt completely as one with the entire Rusyn population of Galicia. The educational movement in the Lemko Region was realized mainly within the framework of the Kačkovs'kyj Society reading rooms, whose headquarters were located in L'viv. The same applies to the cooperative movement. This means that Lemkos generally read the same books (published in L'viv) as the rest of the Rusyn population in eastern Galicia. They learned the same language in school and maintained the same religious rites, the decided majority being Greek Catholic.

The mortar that held together the entire cultural superstructure was an attachment to the historical Rus' nation and to Rus' history and culture that was felt very strongly among at least partially educated people. For instance, many celebrations of the 950th anniversary [in 1938] of the baptism of Rus' took place in the Lemko Region. In this period, Lemkos defined themselves almost exclusively as Rusyns or Rusnaks, while the term "Lemko" was not used at all in the daily speech of the Lemkos themselves. Even the intelligentsia from farther east, those who were conscious Ukrainians, still called themselves — in public at least — Rusyns. I knew many such people. Thus, the massive [and forced] deportation of the Lemko elite, intelligentsia, and prominent peasants to Talerhof [in 1914] was universally felt to be a consequence of the Lemkos' faithfulness to these basic Rusyn national values.

It was in such a situation that a clash with the Ukrainian national movement arose. As long as that movement did not reject the term Rusyn (like [the outstanding Galician Ukrainian writer] Ivan Franko, for instance), there was no problem. Just before World War I and especially during the interwar years, many sociocultural and political organizations in L'viv were actively propagating the term "Ukrainian" to define the population, and they linked the use of that name to the level of one's national consciousness. If you still called yourself a Rusyn, you were considered, nationally speaking, unaware. Consequently, a defensive movement formed in the Lemko Region for the preservation of what we considered our most precious historical value — our Rus'. The Lemkos had Talerhof behind them, that is, they had suffered and died for Rus'. Therefore, with all the more strength and determination they rejected that assimilationist campaign which wanted to give them a new identity and new consciousness — Ukrainian.

This resistance found additional support in the fact that the new nomenclature was not propagated by Lemkos, but by people from eastern [Galicia], in other words by Ukrainians or Mazepa-ites as they were called. In large part, these people were Greek Catholic clergy consciously directed toward Ukrainianization by the hierarchy of the Diocese of Przemyśl. The result was a religious controversy and a mass conversion of Lemkos to Orthodoxy. The latter, in particular, began to argue that both the campaign to deport people to Talerhof and the numerous crimes by the Austrian government [carried out against the Lemkos in 1914-1915] were aided by those eastern [Galician] Ukrainians who at the time were priests or teachers in the Lemko Region. For instance, the perjured testimony of the Ukrainian teacher Huculak from the village of Izby became the basis for the death sentence passed [in 1915] against the [Orthodox]

priest from Brunary, Petro Sandovych. Similarly, during World War II, the Ukrainian Aid Committee [in German-controlled Cracow] prepared lists of Lemkos and handed them to the Gestapo, resulting in many arrests, including that of the principle Lemko activist, Dr. Orest Hnatysak of Krynica, who eventually perished [in the concentration camp] at Auschwitz.

Then came 1947 — the most tragic year for the Lemkos. There is a deep conviction embedded in Lemko consciousness that it was because of the activities of the UPA [Ukrainian Insurgent Army — the Banderites] that Lemkos were deported westward. Hence, it was those Ukrainians from the east again — “the Ukrainians finished us off.” To all of this is added the official interpretation in [Poland’s] mass media that depicts Ukrainians as criminals.

The preceding remarks permit us to formulate the following theses:

(1) Traditionally, Lemkos have always felt themselves to be blood brothers of the Rusyns of [eastern] Galicia. The Lemkos regarded the language used in the Kačkovs’kyj Society publications and in school textbooks as their own beautiful literary language. Thus, any question of the “Lemko nation’s” separateness never arose.

(2) Changes in the Lemkos’ mentality occurred when people from eastern Galicia began violently and at times unscrupulously to impose on them a change of name, which a normal man does not, after all, change everyday like a glove. Some apostles of the new [Ukrainian] nomenclature acted with the zeal of neophytes, even disregarding the fact that the name Rusyn was the nation’s only and universally accepted name from [the time of the tenth century Kievan grand prince] Vladimir the Great down to — at least in Galicia — World War I.

(3) The people working in the [post-World War II] Ukrainian Socio-Cultural Society (USKT) brought with them the cultural baggage and techniques of ideological struggle used before World War II. This was an unforgivable mistake, and if it were not for the self-sacrificing work of a few Lemko activists, a situation like the one in eastern Slovakia [the Prešov Region] would have developed. Outstanding Ukrainian organizations are active there, with radio broadcasts several hours long for Ukrainians and education of children in school to a large extent in Ukrainian, so that everything resounds in the beautiful Ukrainian literary language. The Lemkos [in the Prešov Region] are beginning to pray together from the prayerbook of a “Greek Catholic psalter” (although in a Slovak edition). However, since the people are not allowed to be Rusyns, that is, simply themselves (I was, am, and will remain a Rusyn), they become Slovaks. The machinations with our own “Lemko Page” [in Poland’s Ukrainian-language weekly newspaper, *Naše slovo*] illustrate the foregoing thesis, and to this day the Ukrainian annual almanac almost ignores the existence of Lemko culture in Poland.

(4) The situation has been changing significantly for some time, although it is the opposite of what Hunka says it is. The “Lemko Page” does publish articles by authentic Lemkos, who discuss various aspects of the Lemko culture and history. At present, the “Lemko Page” does not avoid using the names “Rus’” and “Rusyn” whenever authors employ these terms. On the other hand, there is nothing wrong with the fact that some Lemko authors write in the Ukrainian literary language. Perhaps this is even quite appropriate, since one should not distinguish so sharply the Lemko dia-

lect from the Ukrainian literary language as Hunka does. The attitude towards Lemkos and their culture on the part of some Ukrainian activists is changing as well. Because of the above, *Naše slovo* [with its “Lemko Section”] is subscribed to and read by simple Lemkos. One must hope that these healthy tendencies will continue to develop.

To sum up, one must state that as a result of historical evolution, the Lemkos are part of the Rusyn nationality, which is presently called the Ukrainian nationality. This should not hinder those Lemko groups who wish to use the names Rus’ and Rusyn, nor the USKT from exhibiting examples of authentic Lemko culture. Accepting the above principles, there can be no question of “Ukrainianizing” the Lemkos, because they are a group belonging to the Ukrainian nationality. Any artificial or compulsory “Ukrainianization” would mean depriving the Lemkos of their identity and lead to their disappearance, which for Ukrainian culture overall would be not a gain, but a loss. After all, because the Lemkos have such a rich material and spiritual culture, it is precisely they who are enriching the Ukrainian culture in general. The compulsory “Ukrainianization” of the Rusyns in the Prešov Region and its [negative] results fully confirm the foregoing assessment.

Against the background of these remarks, Hunka’s views on the independence of the Lemkos are in some sense understandable, but they cannot be accepted. He did not recognize the positive changes in *Naše slovo*, nor the fact that the strength of the Lemko culture’s “combativeness” always increases in union with the great culture of an entire nationality. We need to break away from these ill-fated incidents of the last sixty years and not continue the conflicts over nomenclature. Obviously, efforts on both sides are necessary to achieve this goal.

R. G.

Response 2

The “White Croatian” theory

It seems to me that Jaroslav Hunka draws conclusions by intuition, since knowledge on the subject of the White Croats is minimal. In my opinion, the White Croats were really a Rus’ tribe, but not the fourth East Slavic nationality (nor the beginning of the contemporary Lemko “nationality”), just one of the old Ukrainian tribes. The fact of the very short-lived political union with the Upper Dnieper region [around Kiev] and the extremely limited general Ukrainian cultural legacy in the Lemko Region (with the exception of the history and myths connected with Kievan Rus’), suggest, according to Hunka, Lemko separateness from the Ukrainians. The first factor was the result of a political power game between vested interests; the second was based on ethnic differences and the economic situation (mainly the differences in the standard and style of living in various Ukrainian lands).

The speech of the Lemkos

The speech of the Lemkos is a dialect of the Ukrainian language, regardless of Lemko consciousness (for instance, the Austrians do not say they speak the Austrian but the German language, and they, like the Swiss, draw from the general German cultural tradition). For that reason, I am also inclined to accept Antoni Kroh’s assertion in the Nowy Sącz exhibition catalogue [on Lemko culture] that Lemkos who consider themselves Ukrainians are Ukrainians, while the others are not.

The role of religion

I agree with Hunka's contention on the harmfulness of the [1595] Union of Brest. It did not spring from the wishes of the people, but from the interest of a small portion of the Rusyn intelligentsia (the clergy), causing a split in the nation. The Union was not only a means of drawing eastern culture closer to the values of the Latin church, it was also a means of Latinization of the liturgy and Polonization of the clergy. It should be remembered that the national strivings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries reflected, among other things (and perhaps even above all), the opposition of the Orthodox to the Union.

That the Union played an enormous role in the national awakening of Ukrainians in Galicia during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries cannot erase the fact that it was an element which divided, and thereby weakened, the nation's unity. Who knows, perhaps if there were no Union, Ukrainian Orthodoxy would have been stronger and would not have succumbed to Muscovite Orthodoxy. At the same time, I am against any sort of drawing of Greek Catholics into Orthodox churches or of any arguments that attribute to them inferiority and lack of religious face, for at present the Orthodox church in Poland is itself no authority. On the other hand, the Greek clergy are too dependent on the Roman Catholic episcopate, and for the time being are unable to offer the Lemkos an alternative to Orthodoxy that would satisfy their national and religious aspirations. "The circle is closing."

The attitude of "pure-blooded" Ukrainians to Lemkos

This attitude is one of contempt, since they ["pure-blooded" Ukrainians] themselves regard the Lemkos as foreigners, even though every Ukrainian claims that Lemkos are Ukrainians. The stereotype of the "inferior type of Ukrainian" has probably become widely accepted. All manifestations of Lemko independence, such as literature in the Lemko dialect, are viewed with ironic tolerance, just as the Poles generally treat Goral or Kashubian literature. Recently, the better treatment toward Lemkos who preserve their ethnic (not national!) separateness is more common among Poles than Ukrainians.

The benefit of resettlement in western and northern Poland

Hunka's assertion about the supposed benefits due to resettlement is false. The author thinks in pre-World War II stereotypes, not taking into account that the Lemkos living in an undisturbed community on their old lands would not have lagged behind in cultural achievements, but most likely would have pressed forward with a desire for knowledge just as they do now. After all, a "cult of knowledge" already existed before the war in the Lemko Region; for example, in the Gorlice district, the proportion of young Lemkos (even those from the poorer towns) enrolled for advanced study was greater than that among Polish villages in the northern part of the same district.

"Rusyns called themselves by a different name"

It is not that "Rusyns call themselves by a different name," but that the Russians appropriated for themselves the nomenclature of ancient Rus', so that in the framework of national identification, the Ukrainians as well as the Belorussians had to adopt names that would distinguish them from the "Muscovite Rusyns."

N. O.

Response 3

I have read Jaroslav Hunka's learned essay entitled,

"Lemkos Today." Well, everyone has the right to express himself on any subject with which he may or may not be familiar. Similarly, each person can regard himself whomever he likes, and does not have to go beyond the limitations of his thinking. But research, especially where history is concerned, should be done by a scholar, such as Mr. Hunka considers himself.

Therefore, I too take advantage of this right, all the more since without permission Mr. Hunka speaks in my name as well. I prefer to do that myself. Let us establish at the outset that state boundaries have never coincided with the ethnic boundaries of peoples. People of various groups and nationalities have inhabited various countries and states. This has had positive and negative consequences. The situation is still the same today, but let us make it possible to enable nationalists to become close and to become acquainted with each other for the common good . . .

There is no need to Ukrainianize the Lemko language and the Lemkos, for the simple reason that like the Hucul and Podolian speech, the Lemko language is the Ukrainian language. And even if Lemko is not a literary language according to today's standards, it probably contains the most archaisms in the Ukrainian language. Whoever does not understand this does not understand much at all.

Because I am not a Catholic, it may not be appropriate for me to speak out on the question of Greek Catholics. In any case, this is not the place for a lecture on the Union of Brest of 1596. Nonetheless, today Greek Catholicism is already a part of the landscape of our national life. It is, so to speak, our Catholicism, and it can no longer be erased — and why should it be? Greek Catholicism has had considerable merit in our development, including the Lemko Region. In any case, today there are no nations or countries with a single, uniform religion. Causing religious quarrels is, to put it mildly, deplorable. On the other hand, has not Hunka at times borrowed his views from elements connected with the [former] Lemko Apostolic Administration which had been active in the western Lemko Region? The breaking of unity among the people occurred, strangely enough, during the 1930s. Does this not give much food for thought? Who was so anxious to tear us away from the rest of the Rusyn-Ukrainians? Perhaps Hunka is borrowing from those who used to call our language a "dialect"?

I, too, Mr. Hunka, am proud of our historical past, although not of everything! I am proud that the Lemko Region has produced great Rusyn-Ukrainians, the creators of our national culture: Pavel of Krosno, a professor at the Jagiellonian University in the sixteenth century; Hryhorij and Michal of Sanok, who already in the sixteenth century translated the Gospels and the Psalter from the Old Church Slavonic language into the "simple Rusyn language," that is, into the Ukrainian literary language of that time; Dmytro Bortnians'kyj, the eighteenth-century Ukrainian composer whose songs you listen to (and perhaps even sing) in church; Mychajlo Verbyc'kyj, the nineteenth-century Ukrainian composer who — oh, how awful — wrote the melody to the national anthem, "Ukraine Has Not Yet Perished"; Lev Gec', the twentieth century painter who founded the Lemko Museum in Sanok; Volodymyr Kubijovyč of Nowy Sącz, the greatest Ukrainian geographer of the twentieth century; Marko Barabolja, the poet from Subcarpathian Rus', and others. These are only a few names chosen from the many, many learned men — writers, poets, artists, and bishops — pro-

duced by the Lemko Region, and who created both our Ukrainian, and thereby Lemko, or if one prefers, Lemko, and thereby Ukrainian, history and culture. Does Hunka speak in their name also?

Jaroslav and Ustym

Response 4

The essay "Lemkos Today" finally fell into my hands as well, and after reading it I experienced mixed feelings, to say the least. Immediately, I asked myself: What was the motive? What was the author guided by? What did he want to gain by writing something of this sort? Probably not much and, I believe, nothing positive. I would like to point out at the outset that I myself am a "staunch Lemko from my forefathers," and that as of now I am 35 years old.

The author, Jaroslav Hunka, writes in the plural, and in connection with that, a question immediately occurs to me: who gave him such authority to speak from the position of the "whole nation"? A few Janeks, Wlodeks, and others sitting there (as he says in his essay) do not equal the whole Lemko tribe. And God have mercy on that tribe and its national consciousness. What do they want to create, a great Lemko nation? Fortunately, not all young people, at least here in the native Lemko Region, have such wonderful thoughts.

When I consider Hunka's essay in this way, I come to the conclusion that a "conscious Lemko" could not have written it, for he would not have carried out such a hostile, mole-like job, doing harm above all to his own nest. Has this people not experienced enough wrongs through bloodshed? After all, further divisions among the small handful that remains can forebode no good, and if they turn out for the better, it will be for a third party who could care less about maintaining the Lemko population. The process of Polonization is already bearing such fruits today. [This policy proceeds in the following manner:] let us first divide them into Greek Catholics and Orthodox, then into Lemko nationalists and Lemko Ukrainians, and a little more time will pass and there will be nothing. Divisions lead to weakness, and no one takes any notice of the weak. This, unfortunately, is the bitter truth.

If there are so few of us (and that is a fact), let us not divide ourselves further, but let us strive with all possible resources for unity, because strength is found in unity. Divisions always weaken, and what has yet to weaken among the Lemkos when everything is already so strongly shaken? It is also difficult to agree with Hunka's argument which I quote: "Rusyns, in the sense of a nationality that once inhabited Rus', no longer exist, because Rus' doesn't exist either!" It is true that Rus' no longer exists, but is a change in the name of a territory any reason for rejecting it and striving for separation? After all, the nationality remains the same. Since that part of the Rus' nationality to which we were closest changed its name from Rusyn to Ukrainian, the Lemkos, who are a part of this Rus' nationality, should strive for the same thing. Certainly the Lemko Region, severed as it was from another Ukraine, preserved certain traits of separateness, but that still does not give one any rights to separate nationhood.

Consequently, there could not and cannot be any question of the so-called Ukrainianization of the Lemko nation, since there was and is no such nation. A change in name is the result of certain historical processes, and the individual must conform to it regardless of his preferences.

Above all, one's mother tongue (language), tradition, culture, beliefs and religion reflect one's adherence to a nationality. And now I ask for an answer: are these characteristics closer to the Lemkos and the Ukrainians, or the Lemkos and the Poles, or the Lemkos and the Slovaks? From this arises one conclusion: the conscious Lemko knows that he is part of a nationality in the East, and the fact that [that nationality] now calls itself Ukrainian (whom contemporary history and Polish reality present in an unfavorable light, not admitting to their own mistakes) is not cause for a change in one's [national] affiliation.

C. D.

A LETTER FROM THE SOVIET UKRAINE

Recently, a leading scholar on Lemko history and culture who lives in the Soviet Ukraine sent a letter to a Lemko activist in the United States. Because the Lemko-American activist is planning to return to live in his native Lemko Region in Poland, he had requested and received suggestions as to cultural policies that might be adopted in the future in the Lemko homeland. We publish the letter, and in order to avoid any possible repercussions, we omit the names of the author and addressee. — Editor

October 29, 1986

Dear Colleague:

Thank you kindly for your letter. I am very happy that the question of the development of cultural traditions among the Lemkos has been renewed. However, the Lemko problem remains relatively complicated. I believe that in order to complete the process which has already begun, we should follow that orientation which has the most chance of success for the development of the cultural traditions of our people.

It is possible to distinguish the following basic orientations that are at present being followed by Lemkos:

First — the generally internationalist orientation. Supporters of this orientation consider that Lemkos are a part of the "Rus' people," which is understood to mean all East Slavic peoples. It was from this theory that in the 1930s the idea arose for Lemkos to emigrate eastward to Russia.

Second orientation — that the Lemkos are a distinct, fourth East Slavic nationality called Carpatho-Rusyns. Such a view is supported by Paul Magocsi in Canada, certain Polish "benefactors" of Lemkos, and a few Lemkos themselves.

Third orientation — that the Lemkos are a part of the Ukrainian nationality. This is the most generally accepted theory and it is historically accurate. It is supported by historians and ethnographers in the Soviet Ukraine, in Czechoslovakia, and by most Lemkos.

What advantages can each of these orientations bring to Lemkos?

The first orientation is not really concerned with the particular cultural characteristics of Lemkos and their centuries-long achievements in the folk-arts. Without doubt, this orientation which proposes the existence of a so-called "single Rus'" ethnos would disperse completely Lemkos in the sea of contemporary civilization. The experiments of the supporters of this orientation have not brought any positive benefits to the small group of mountain dwellers in our dear homeland.

The second orientation, although it seems attractive and promises an independent development for Lemkos, would not have the strength to guarantee the existence of Lemkos in the context of the interaction of modern thought. The fate of Lemko separatism is similar to the fate of a seed stuck between two grindstones.

The third orientation is responsive to the historical past of the Lemkos, and it has the best perspective and hope for preserving the conditions that are necessary for the comprehensive development of ethnographic groups. The adherence of Lemkos to the Ukrainian nationality is truly universally recognized. This is even confirmed by the fact that the Lemkos themselves have preserved the historic Ukrainian national name — Rusyn.

In fact, it has been Ukrainian scholars who have for the most part worked toward preserving Lemko culture and the traditional customs of the Lemkos. Academician Filaret Kolessa collected and published more than one thousand Lemko folksongs. The monograph of Ivan Verchrats'kyj, *Pro hovir halyc'kych lemkiw* (On the Speech of Galicia's Lemkos, 1902) has until today not lost its scholarly value. The Lemkos were continually studied by Volodymyr Hnatjuk, Fedir Vovk, Ivan Franko, Lesja Ukrajinka, Ivan Nečuj-Levyč'kyj, Konstantyn T. Huslystyj, and others, each of whom achieved quite a bit on behalf of the development of the distinct culture of the Lemkos. In the development of Lemko music, special praise must go to the leading Ukrainian composers Ja. Jaroslavenko, Anatol' Kos-Anatol's'kyj, Mykola Kolessa, and Jevhen Kozak. Here in the Soviet Ukraine, Lemko anthologies by M. Sobolevs'kyj, O. Hyz, and Ivan Majčyk have been published. It is also here that the Bajko Sisters were raised, that group which holds the honorary title: National Artists of the Ukrainian S.S.R. Lemko songs are also performed by professional ensembles and amateur groups, most especially Lemko choirs, among which it is necessary to mention the folk choir Lemkovyna. Not long ago a record album with Lemko songs was released under the title "Spivaje Lemkovyna" (The Lemko Region in Song).

In order to encourage the cultural achievements of the Lemkos, it is necessary to follow the third orientation. In Poland, cultural work should be carried out with the help of the Ukrainian Socio-Cultural Society (USKT), making careful use of the church and taking into consideration the present position on this matter of the government of the Polish People's Republic. In such a situation, there might be some help (however modest) from the Lemko community in the Soviet Ukraine.

Your own efforts to help Lemkos deserve unlimited praise and we learn of your initial successes with great satisfaction. Please also send from me my thanks [in this matter] to the Pelc family.

In general, your idea to create a cultural center in the Lemko Region is an excellent one and it deserves all kinds of support. For its realization, you must unite both organizational and individual forces and obtain from the Polish government approval for the creation of such a center in order to assure its normal operation. In that regard, you must not allow the slightest intrusion of any politics so as to avoid hatred toward this positive work.

I wish you the best of health, happiness, and positive results in your work on behalf of Lemkos.

FROM OUR CENTER

With this issue, we complete our year-long series on the Lemkos in Poland today. The criticisms of the essay by Jaroslav Hunka and the letter from the Soviet Ukraine to a Polish-born Lemko American published in this issue reveal that not everyone welcomes the independent-minded orientation of the present Lemko revival. Their criticism stems from what has become by now an old argument: namely, that both the Lemkos and for that matter all Carpatho-Rusyns are too small to survive as a culture, and that today they must identify as Ukrainians and become part of the general Ukrainian cultural sphere.

It is not necessary here to list how many ethnolinguistic groups in the world are smaller in number than Carpatho-Rusyns, but who nonetheless have survived in the past and present. We reject, in particular, that tendency in our Carpatho-Rusyn past which more than once has seen our intellectual leadership (clerical and lay) strive to be something other than it is.

Before World War I, it seemed that to be worthy of respect, a Carpatho-Rusyn had to become a Hungarian. Since then, the choices have increased to include, at various times, Czech, Slovak, Russian, Ukrainian, or Polish. All such strivings were and are based on a deep sense of inferiority, in which "our people" strove at greatest lengths to be something — anything — as long as not Carpatho-Rusyn. In the United States as well, Rusyn Americans had for decades been basically ashamed (more often than not because they were unaware) of the Carpatho-Rusyn cultural heritage of their parents. For them, it seem that to be an American "like everybody else" was the ideal solution.

However, the "roots fever" of the 1970s and its aftermath have proven the emptiness of striving after "false gods" or "greater" identities, and they have shown that to be an American with a cultural identity from any part of the world was a normal and positive thing.

A younger generation of Rusyn Americans, joined in large measure by our parents and grandparents, does not have any inferiority complex toward our Carpatho-Rusyn heritage. Therefore, we do not need to be anything else to survive and prosper as Americans. In this context, it is particularly gratifying to have learned through this series of articles on Lemkos that in Poland a small but growing and energetic group of fellow Rusyns has chosen the path to be themselves.

To be sure, it is only for the Lemkos in Poland to determine what is most appropriate for them, but we wish them all the best in their efforts to live up to the call that has continued to inspire many of our people, even under the most difficult circumstances: *Ja rusyn byl, jesm' i budu* — I Was, Am, and Will Remain a Rusyn.

THE LEMKO QUESTION IN THE POLISH PRESS, 1980-1986

The interest aroused by the Lemko question among the Polish people has gone through several phases during the twentieth century. Before World War II, the Polish state tried to make the Lemko territory its battleground in the struggle with Ukrainian nationalism. Intense interest in the Lemko question during this period gave rise to a veritable flood of publications in the Polish press. After the war, and despite the emergence during the mid-1940s of certain policies concerning the Lemkos, the press completely ignored their existence. But with the revival of journalism in Poland after 1956, the Lemko question once again became a matter of discussion and analysis in the daily press as well as in periodicals dealing with literary and social issues.

But a real "eruption" of interest in the Lemkos came during the 1980s. The causes of this phenomenon must be sought in political changes which took place as a result of the Solidarity movement, the more actively national policies of the government, and, perhaps most of all, in an immense — at least under Polish conditions — resurgence of Lemko community life. The debate as to whether the Lemkos are a separate nationality or a part of the Ukrainian nationality is no longer limited to small, private discussion groups, but has become subject of articles in the press.

A few events in the life of the Lemko community have aroused special interest. These include the exhibit, the Lemko Region and the Lemkos, held in Nowy Sącz (February to June, 1984), and a concert in honor of Taras Ševčenko in Cracow (June, 1986). These two events, on the heels of the first crucial discussion of the Lemko question in the Solidarity weekly, *Solidarność*, in 1981, marked two "milestones" in Poland's Lemko debate.

Since the issue has once again arisen as a topic in Poland, the debate has passed through several phases. At first, the discussions centered around various aspects of Lemko life: their history (Lemkos during World War II, the "Vistula campaign"); their culture (the painter Nykyfor, the Lemko cultural festivals called Vatra); and their religious life (quarrels between Catholics and the Orthodox, the condition of Lemko Greek Catholic churches). Finally, the debate has addressed the most fundamental question: "Who are the Lemkos?"

It is evident that this question still interests Polish public opinion. The answers given in the Polish press suggest that the views on the subject have not changed significantly since the interwar years. The most prevalent view still is that the Lemkos are "something" different from the Ukrainians, but what precisely that "something" is, remains unclear (A. Kroh, R. Brykowski, M. Kozłowski, J. Harasymowicz). One curious suggestion (which has been made, albeit on the margin of the discussion (Garbalewski), is that the Lemkos are in fact a "forgotten segment" of the Polish nation.

The majority of writers still seem mostly interested in the "exotic" elements of Lemko life. For some authors, this interest becomes a peculiar kind of fascination with the catastrophic aspects of the dying world of the "half-eaten sheep" (A. Bleja, R. Wójcik). Writers in this category rather avoid taking a position on the key question of origin. Another interesting aspect of the discussion is the space given to the Ukrainian point of view (W. Mokry, M. Łesiów, M. Siwicki) and, significantly, the nearly complete absence of authentic

Lemko voices.

The political context of the debate is not altogether clear. Undoubtedly, some articles have a decidedly political origin, such as J. Sobolewski's polemical defence of Orthodoxy in the Lemko Region directed against the Catholic Church, or the attack published by the Communist daily, *Gazeta Krakowska*, against the position taken by the Catholic opposition weekly, *Tygodnik Powszechny*. However, it does not appear that either the Polish government, or the Opposition, clearly favor any of the theses put forward as to the national identity of the Lemkos. Sometimes it does appear that the government (and the writers who are friendly to it) favor the notion of a specific Lemko nationality, whereas independent political opinion, especially the Catholic writers, lean towards the Ukrainian point of view. However, views of either side do not seem to be wholly consistent.

The following bibliography has only one aim: to show that there is at present great interest in the Lemko question in Poland. Only the future will show what the results of this interest will be. The bibliography has been arranged in chronological order. Under each year, works have been listed by topics. In cases where articles have no topic in common, the principle of alphabetical order, according to names of authors has been followed.

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EUROPEAN HOMELANDS TOUR!

AUGUST 11-31, 1988

This unique tour of the Carpatho-Rusyn homelands will start in Vienna, the former Hapsburg imperial capital, where we will meet our Austrian tour bus and driver. We go on to Budapest, and from there eastward to Mariapócs for the Feast of the Assumption (new calendar), and then on a visit to the Greek Catholic areas of northeastern Hungary.

From there, we will cross the border into Czechoslovakia in the direction of Eastern Slovakia. We will visit the Greek Catholic and Orthodox cathedral churches in Prešov, the cities of Bardejov and Svidník (including the Rusyn-Ukrainian cultural and ethnographic museum), and some of the Prešov Region's Rusyn villages with their unforgettable wooden churches.

Crossing into Poland at Nowy Sącz (with an important museum of Lemko-Rusyn icons and modern art), we will begin our visit of the Lemko Region. This will include the new Orthodox church at Zydranowa and Greek Catholic church at Komańcza. We will celebrate the Transfiguration (old calendar) and visit the cathedral church in Sanok and historic Przemyśl (Peremyśl').

From Przemyśl, we will cross the border into the Soviet Union. At L'viv, the former capital of historic Galicia, we will see the spectacular Museum of Ethnography and Traditional Architecture, with seven full-size villages from different areas of the Carpathian Mountains as they were at the time our people came to North America. We will also visit a

collective farm to see village life as it is today.

Moving on southward and travelling through the Verecký Pass — the ancient gateway used by the Magyars and later Mongols on their way to the Danubian Basin — we enter Subcarpathian Rus' (Transcarpathia) for a rare sightseeing excursion that will include historic Užhorod (with its renowned Greek Catholic, now Orthodox, Cathedral), and from there to the geographic center of Europe high in the Carpathian Mountains between Rachiv and Jasinja. Returning to the lowlands, we will take part in the Assumption Pilgrimage (old calendar) at Subcarpathia's famous monastery at Černeča Hora (near Mukačevo).

Crossing back into Hungary, we will visit the new Greek Catholic seminary at Nyíregyháza on our way to Budapest, where we will spend the night. From there, it's on to Vienna for our last evening together before returning home.

For a complete brochure and further details for this unique visit to the Carpatho-Rusyn homeland, write: Reverend Brian Eyman, 267 East 197, Euclid, Ohio 44119. Telephone (216) 486-2163.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Cleveland, Ohio. On May 1, 1988, the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, in conjunction with its fifth annual meeting, will sponsor a scholarly conference entitled: "The American Carpatho-Russian Greek Catholic Diocese: A Fifty-Year Retrospective." Papers on the establishment and development of the Carpatho-Russian Diocese will be presented by Father Laurence Barriger, Father Brian Keleher, and Professor Richard Renoff. The discussant will be Protopresbyter John Yurcisin.

The conference will take place on Sunday, May 1, from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m., at John Carroll University, the Recplex Building — Jardine Room. Access to John Carroll in University Heights, Ohio (a suburb of Cleveland) and to the Recplex Building is off Warrensville Center Road. The public is cordially invited to attend.

Washington, D.C. On May 28, 1988, Dr. Paul R. Magocsi will present a paper entitled "Religion in the Carpathians," which will discuss the evolution in the twentieth century and the present status of the Greek Catholic and Orthodox churches among the Carpatho-Rusyn population in Poland and Czechoslovakia. The lecture is part of a conference on the Millennium of Christianity Among the East Slavs, sponsored by the Keenan Institute for Russian Studies of the Woodrow Wilson International Center at the Smithsonian Institute. For further information, contact the conference coordinator, Dr. Declan Murphy, at the Library of Congress, 202-287-5205.

OUR FRONT COVER

Kristina Solaničová Jaroščák, from the village of Cheml'ová, Sáros county. Photographed in the 1800's.

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THE CARPATHO-RUSYN AMERICAN

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